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10

Suzanne Moore
Indecency is what
we really want page 19



THE INDEPENDENT

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FRIDAY 4 OCTOBER 1996

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Kevin Maxwell hid £32m pension switch

STEVE BOGGAN
Chief Reporter

Kevin Maxwell concealed a £32m share transfer from Mirror Group pension fund officials which was later used to raise a £22.5m loan for a private Maxwell company.

Inquiries by *The Independent* have established that Kevin was instrumental in transferring the shares away from the pension funds, but he failed to tell fund administrators for more than 13 months that the shares had gone. It was not until Robert Maxwell died that the men running the funds found out that the shares had been removed, and they have still not been recovered.

Details of the transaction

ule of our shares was produced with the Euris stock still on the list. He knew they were no longer there, but didn't tell us.

"There were also at least three formal meetings of trustees when the misleading schedule was produced, but he said nothing. Finally, when Robert died, we were left believing we held these shares for the pensioners when, in fact, they had been pledged to a bank more than a year earlier."

The disclosures coincide with concerns voiced last week by George Staple, director of the SFO, over the "emasculatation" of prosecutors in large fraud cases. A Court of Appeal ruling in the Blue Arrow case required the prosecution to pare down indictments into sets of easily understandable cases. However, when dealing with Kevin Maxwell, Mr Justice Buckley said it should be "unusual" for a second trial to take place.

"The position now," said Mr Staple, "is that in the most complex fraud cases, the indictment, already reduced to the bare minimum, will be split up to produce a series of manageable trials. But it is very unlikely that a second trial will ever take place."

The man in charge of recording the movements of shares to and from the Maxwell pension funds was Harold Abraham. He drew up a monthly schedule of shares in the funds' possession. For 13 months before Robert Maxwell died, his schedule showed that the Euris shares were still held by the pension funds - because no one told him they had been removed.

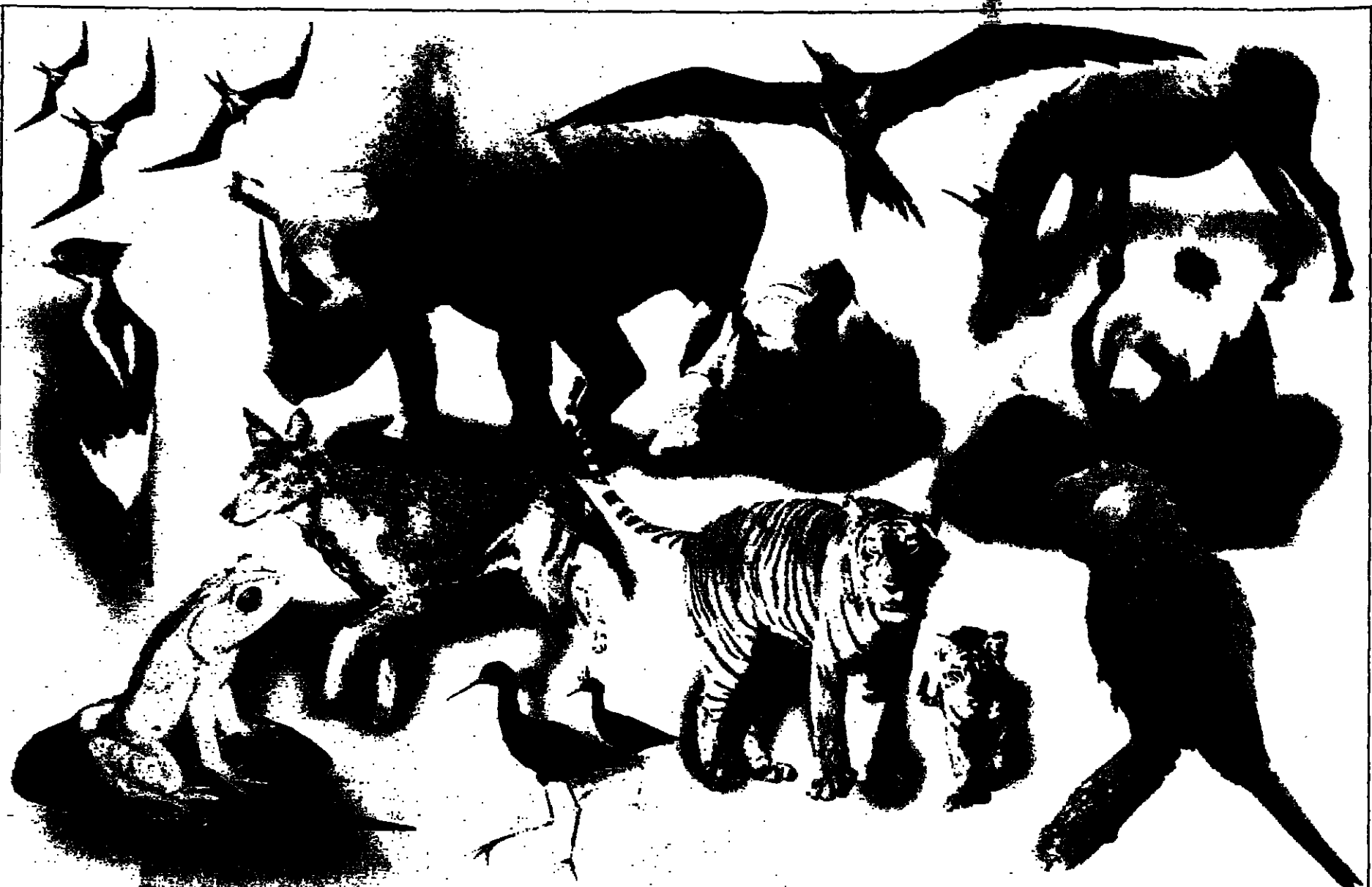
Mr Abraham said: "I should have been told about any sales or transfers of shares from the pension schemes to anybody, be it to another company in-house, or to a stockbroker in order to enable me to keep track of which shares we still owned."

Asked if he believed Kevin Maxwell ought to have told him the shares had been transferred, he replied: "Absolutely". It is not known to what extent Kevin kept other trustees informed. These included his father, Robert, and brother, Ian.

Kevin Maxwell was asked to comment via his solicitors, but no reply was forthcoming. However, Keith Oliver, of Peters and Peters said: "Given that Mr Maxwell's conduct in the course of his directorship of Bishopsgate Investment Management Ltd and the Maxwell private companies was examined in the criminal trial, it seems to me unfair and inappropriate for you to be conducting some sort of trial by newspaper."

Fragile pyramid, page 2

Quarter of world's mammals face oblivion



Red for danger: Some of the 911 animal species on the new Red List published this week

Photo montage: Jonathan Anstee

NICHOLAS SCHOON
Environment Correspondent

A quarter of the world's mammal species are threatened with extinction, according to an exhaustive analysis of the state of the planet's animal life.

The latest Red List from the IUCN, the World Conservation Union, published this week says 911 animal species are critically endangered - meaning they are in real danger of extinction within a few years. They range from mammals like the Siberian tiger to tiny insects and fish.

The total number of recorded ex-

tinctions among both plants and animals over the past 400 years is put at 1,265 species. But scientists agree many more were wiped out by humanity before they were even discovered and described. The prime causes of the extinctions are destruction of natural habitats to create farmland and provide timber, hunting, collection for the pet trade and pollution.

In its 1994 Red List the IUCN, an international grouping of voluntary and government conservation bodies, judged 18 per cent of mammal species to be threatened - their population had fallen sharply and there was at least

some danger of extinction. That was based on incomplete information. Since then the mammals have joined the more numerous birds to become the only two classes of animal for which full assessments of conservation status have been done.

For birds, the threatened proportion is put at 11 per cent. "We've now got a much fuller, more objective," said Georgina Mace of the Institute of Zoology in London, who helped produce the new list. "The most significant finding is that 25 per cent of mammals are threatened."

But she judged freshwater species

of fish, reptile and amphibian around the world to be most endangered.

The Red List divides threatened species into three categories - critically endangered, endangered and vulnerable - based on population decline, scarcity and distribution. For mammals the respective numbers are 169 species, 315 and 612, and the percentages are 4, 7 and 14.

The number of individual animals left in the wild is a few hundred or, at most, a few thousand. The vaquita, a porpoise found in Mexico's Gulf of California, is down to just 96 individuals. In Brazil there is just one male Spix's

macaw left in the wild - about 30 are in captivity.

Later this year the Cambridge-based World Conservation Monitoring Centre, which did much of the work on the Red List, will produce a list of threatened plants. Published with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh, it will show that 33,730 higher plant species, 13 per cent of all that are known, are threatened.

"Going, Going, Gone", an Independent/World Wide Fund for Nature book on Britain's threatened wildlife, written by Nicholas Schoon, is published by Bookman Publishers next month.

Labour peeress forced out in Greer scandal

PETER VICTOR

The controversy over payments to MPs claimed another political victim last night when Labour front-bencher Baroness Turner of Camden, the party's employment spokesperson in the Lords, was forced to resign.

She was asked to resign after the party became aware she had given a television interview in which she defended the lobbyist at the centre of the cash for questions controversy, Ian Greer.

Lady Turner, a director of Ian Greer Associates, agreed "it would be inappropriate" to remain on the front bench after giving the interview to Channel 4.

Her resignation was announced by the Labour Party

before the interview was broadcast.

Interviewed about Mr Greer's decision to abandon his libel case against the *Guardian*, Lady Turner said: "It is always a lottery to enter into litigation but I did firmly believe, and I still firmly believe, in the innocence of Ian Greer and I will continue to support him while I believe that."

She saw no reason why she should not be a front bench spokesperson while also being a director of Mr Greer's company, one of the most prominent parliamentary lobbying groups.

Lady Turner said Mr Greer was "absolutely in the clear. I have no intention of resigning because to do so would look as though I believed some-

thing in the allegations and I don't."

"I am quite certain Ian has behaved completely honourably throughout. My position is absolutely clear: while I continue to believe in his innocence I shall continue to support him and I shall continue to remain a member."

She defended Mr Greer's payment of £10,000 to Mr Hamilton for business introductions the MP made.

"It is quite a standard commercial practice to pay commission to people who introduce business to you," she said.

Asked if she thought she should remain as a front bench Labour spokesman she said that was a matter for the Labour leadership, although

she saw no reason why she should not.

The party leadership apparently did not agree with Lady Turner and within hours the Labour Party's leader in the Lords, Lord Richard, issued a statement announcing her resignation.

"There is no suggestion that she has acted improperly in her capacity as a director of her company," Lord Richard said. He added that he accepted that Lady Turner was speaking in a personal capacity.

"However, after discussing the matter with her, she has agreed it would be inappropriate for her to remain as Labour's front bench spokesperson on employment and is therefore stepping down."

QUICKLY

Silent but deadly
Every member of the SAS and SBS is to sign a personal contract undertaking never to publish details of their unit and how they do their work. Page 8

Fares hopes sink
The bonanza of cheap cross-Channel fares is unlikely to be repeated following yesterday's merger announcement by the two main ferry operators, P&O and Stena. Page 6

Watercolour triumph
The Tate Gallery has acquired a £5m watercolour collection, said to be one of the most significant collections of British works to have remained in private hands. Page 7

Queen scornful of Diana's bulimia

PAUL VALLEY

The degree of ferocity and bitterness which surrounded the divorce of the Prince and Princess Wales - and the extent to which constitutional considerations yied with personal acrimony - is revealed in the biography of the Queen by historian Ben Pimlott.

A deep anger lay behind the Queen's decision at the end of 1995 to take control of the situation as her son and daughter-in-law moved slowly and publicly towards divorce.

Prompted by the Princess of Wales's interview on BBC's *Panorama* a month before the

Monarch, Pimlott reveals, was determined not to let her daughter-in-law have the last word.

"After the *Panorama* interview she consulted the Prime Minister, the Archbishop of Canterbury and senior House-hold staff," he writes. "Then she made a pre-emptive strike - writing letters to both the Prince and Princess pronouncing, with her husband's support, that an early divorce was desirable."

The Queen was scornful of Diana's unreliability and disdainful of the bulimia which was one of the many psychological ailments of the Princess.

"The tone of the letters was more measured than she felt,"

reveals an extract from the book published in *The Independent* today. "According to one close source, they came out of a deep exasperation, and of a desire to state her position in incontestable prose because... 'bulimia re-writes history in 24 hours'."

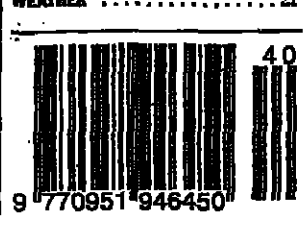
Pimlott's account is based on confidential interviews with the Queen's closest friends and most senior advisers, including Princess Margaret. The book also reveals that the Queen was aware before the wedding of Charles and Diana - "because a courier had felt bound to tell her" - of Charles's relationship with Camilla Parker Bowles.

Pimlott says, "The knowledge of this prospectless liaison, and the desire that he should put it behind him" may have encouraged in the Queen hopes that Charles's friendship with Diana, whose grandmother had been a courtier for 20 years, would lead to a marriage.

"The result was a fateful collision, which drew the royally-connected adolescent and the Prince into a marriage of convenience that was disguised to everybody, including themselves, as a love match... The Queen played a part in the collision. In the autumn of 1980, she asked Diana to Balmoral. Family in crisis, page 18

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SCARPETTA COMES TO TOWN
in the electrifying new bestseller
by PATRICIA CORNWELL
LITTLE BROWN

news

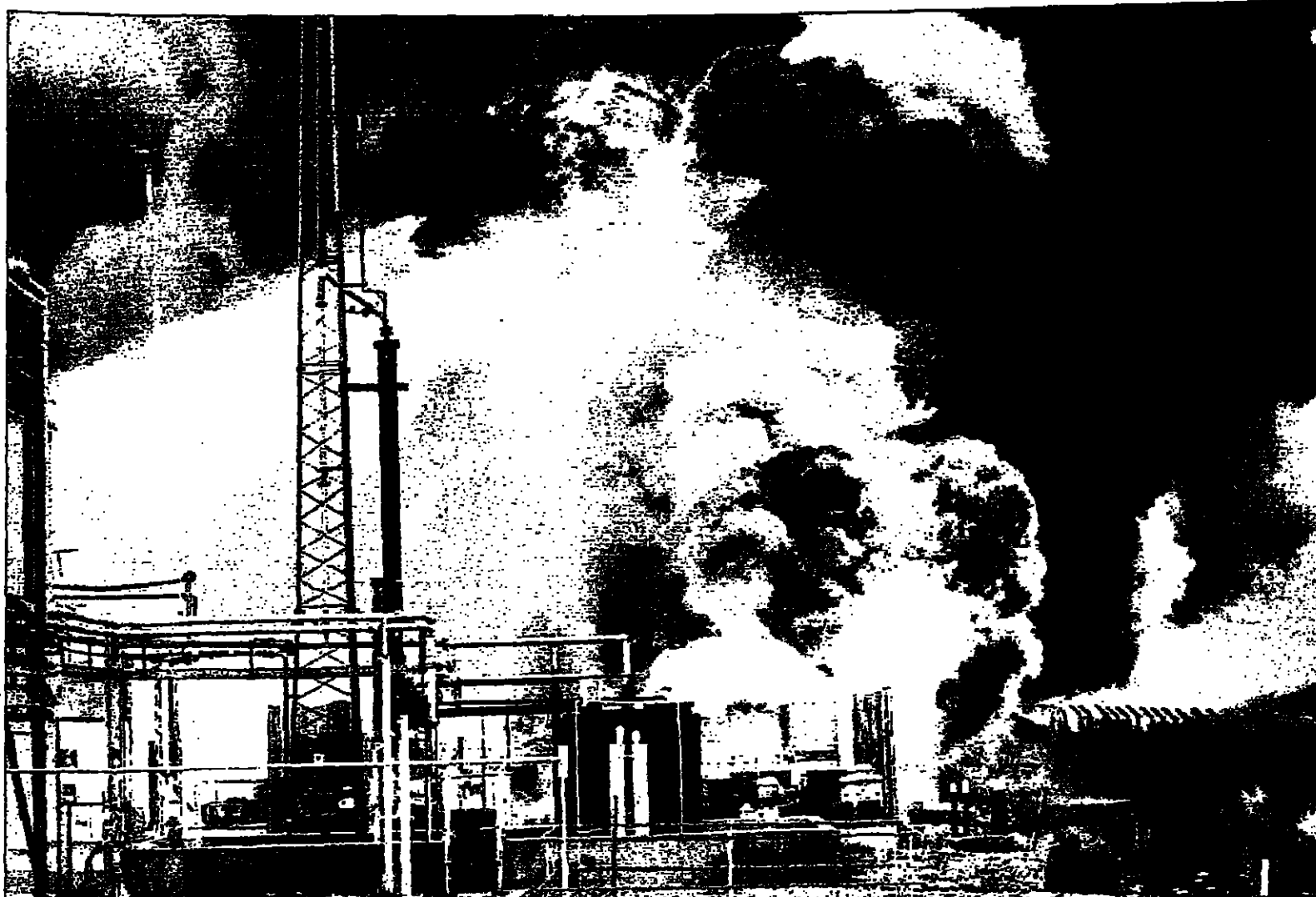
Blast closes Severn bridges

STEVE BOGGAN and NICHOLAS SCHOON

Claims by environmentalists that a deadly gas widely used during the First World War was released in a huge chemical plant explosion were denied last night by the plant's owners. Albright & Wilson insisted that a cloud released over Avonmouth and Gloucester contained no phosgene. Greenpeace had claimed that the gas had been mixed with two other chemicals during the inferno.

Both Severn estuary crossings and the M49, M48 and parts of the M4 were closed yesterday as chemical fallout drifted north east from Avonmouth. Tens of thousands of householders were warned to stay indoors. Avon fire brigade later said the gas would cause only minor irritation.

The alert began at 10.30am with a large explosion at the plant. Five workers and six firefighters were taken to hospital with minor injuries. About 100 firefighters took two hours to bring the blaze under control.



Clouds of chaos: Fire rages at the chemical plant in Avonmouth yesterday, causing widespread disruption

Photograph: Christopher Jones

Murder of boy, 6, linked to occult

JOJO MOYES

The mother of Rikki Neave, the six-year-old boy found strangled in 1994, would often lift him up by his throat and had repeatedly threatened to kill him, a court was told yesterday.

The opening day of the trial of Ruth Neave, 28, also heard that she had a fascination with murder and the occult, used her son as a drugs courier and often left him to fend for himself.

Almost two years ago the child's body was found laid in a "very distinctive" position close to his home on the Welland Estate, Peterborough.

18 hours after his mother reported him missing, James Hunt QC, for the prosecution, told the jury at Northampton Crown Court.

"He had been asphyxiated - strangled. He was killed by having his own clothing pulled up, twisted around his neck in such a way that the zipper from his anorak left its impression in his neck," Mr Hunt said.

The position of Rikki's naked body on the ground was a clear sign of involvement with black magic. The pathologist who examined the body could find no sign of sexual assault.

The trial continues today.

Major hands over all papers in libel case

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES
Legal Affairs Editor

The parliamentary watchdog investigating the cash-for-questions allegations against the Tory MP Neil Hamilton will be given full access to all government papers in the former trade minister's abandoned libel action.

John Major has written to Sir Gordon Downey, the Commissioner for Parliamentary Standards, saying that it would be in the general interest for his investigation to be carried out "as swiftly as possible" and promised to make available all relevant documents. He could inspect all the papers the Government provided to the court.

Sir Gordon meanwhile wrote yesterday to Mohammed al-Fayed, the Harrods' boss at the centre of the allegations, asking him to specify them and to provide supporting evidence. The government documents at Sir Gordon's disposal will include the minute drawn up by the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Robin Butler, of a telephone conversation in which Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, asked Mr Hamilton whether he had a financial relationship with the parliamentary lobbyist Ian Greer, which Mr Hamilton denied.



Object of the exercise: Sir Gordon Downey, left, will have full access to official papers on the case of Neil Hamilton



Mr Hamilton admitted on Tuesday that he had received some £10,000 from Mr Greer, although he insisted they were fees for introducing the lobbyist to new business.

Mr Major's intervention came amid further allegations, about the MP and his wife accepting payments in kind from Mr Greer and Harrods vouchers from Mr Fayed.

Mr Hamilton dismissed claims that he had charged payments for furniture at the Peter Jones department store in Chelsea to an account kept by Mr Greer's firm, and that Mr

Greer had footed the bill for a £1,000 painting from a gallery. The MP said: "The latest allegations in the *Guardian* that I received gifts, in addition to the commission payments which I have already announced, are simply another fabrication."

Alan Rusbridger, the editor, said papers supplied by Mr Greer for the libel action "tell the true story of how Mrs Hamilton bought furniture on Mr Greer's account and how Ian Greer Associates also paid for paintings worth almost £1,000 as well as plane tickets."

Mr Fayed said yesterday that

he wrote to the chairman of the now-defunct Select Committee on Members' Interests, Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith, on 5 December 1994, offering to give oral evidence and "laying before the committee some details of my financial dealings with Mr Greer, his company and Mr Hamilton including the payments which Mr Hamilton had asked for in cash and Harrods gift vouchers on 12 occasions between June 1987 and November 1989".

The investigation was transferred to the privileges committee, before whom Mr Fayed appeared in November. Rupert Grey, Mr Hamilton's solicitor, said of the claims concerning the Harrods vouchers: "Like all the other allegations from Mr Fayed, these are without foundation."

In the wake of disclosures that Mr Greer contributed to the election fighting funds of 24 MPs, 21 of them Tory, Conservative Party chairman Brian Mawhinney wrote to agents yesterday saying that the party did not accept donations if they had "strings attached", or if there was reason to believe they included illegally obtained monies, were from foreign governments or royal families or from unknown sources.

'Investment managers kept in the dark over transfer'

It was on 3 September 1990 - one year and two months before his father fell overboard from his yacht off the Canary Islands - that Kevin Maxwell's involvement in the movement of £32m in pension fund shares first began.

The fragile pyramid of lending that was to collapse around Robert Maxwell's ears had already begun to crack when, as a director of Bishopsgate Investment Management Ltd (BIM), which administered a variety of Maxwell group pension funds, Kevin Maxwell wrote to the company secretary of Euris, a Paris-based investment trust, telling him of the transfer of shares to one of Robert Maxwell's private companies.

At that point, and for the following year, Jean-Marie Grisard, Euris' company secretary, knew more about the ownership of the shares than the men administering the pension funds. In a letter, personally signed, Kevin Maxwell wrote: "Please note that the above shares have now transferred to our associated company, Pergamon Holdings Ltd, Maxwell House, London."

On the same day, a £22.5m loan was raised for Pergamon - later to become Headington Holdings Ltd - by the Banque Nationale de Paris and the shares were used as security. BNP still holds the shares and is fighting a court action to keep hold of them.

Before his trial, sources examining the loss of the shares told *The Independent* that Kevin Maxwell had not informed the relevant officials within BIM of the movement of the shares. It

Steve Boggan on the trail of £32m in shares from Mirror Group pension fund

is not known to what extent other trustees, who included Robert and Ian Maxwell, were kept informed.

However, a schedule of shareholdings was produced each month for use by officials

Asked whether he believed Kevin Maxwell ought to have informed him of the movement of the shares, he replied: "Absolutely. If they were sold, he should have passed me a copy of the sale agreement between



Kevin Maxwell: Bullying father determined actions

and trustees - but this incorrectly showed over a 13-month period that the Euris shares were still in the BIM portfolio.

Harold Abraham, the investment manager who drew up the schedule and who was responsible for keeping records of shares registered to BIM, said: "I should have been told about any sales or transfers of shares from the pension schemes to anybody, be it to another company in-house or to a stockbroker in order to enable me to keep track of which shares we still owned."

"My schedule was passed around at the quarterly investment committee meetings."

'I should have been told about any sales or transfers of shares from pension schemes to companies or stockbrokers'

the two companies, which I would then have treated as a contract of sale, because that would also state the cash figures involved so that I could add that to the amount they owed us."

"We would not have passed away assets of that sort of value to another company... without getting some money back for them."

Asked whether he was aware of BIM receiving any money for the shares, Mr Abraham replied: "No."

"If they had been lent to Headington, I should have been informed that the shares were being registered into another company's name, but I wasn't."

significant shorts

Pager firms to tighten security

Mobile pager companies are to meet next week to discuss urgent security measures after the revelation that hackers monitored messages sent to Labour leader Tony Blair's aides, revealing his personal movements.

Alan Wilkinson, chairman of the UK Paging Operators' Association, admitted that its members discussed in January the possibility that messages to the country's 800,000 pagers could be intercepted - but did not take any extra security measures.

"We wouldn't advise sending explicit messages which contain sensitive information," said a spokeswoman for Vodapage, which has 200,000 subscribers. BT, the largest paging company, insisted that customers would be aware that the system was not completely secure, but added that it had had no complaints from customers.

'Fertility law against widow'

DB, the widow battling to bear a child using her dead husband's sperm, has the law against her, the High Court was told yesterday.

David Pannick, counsel for the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, which has blocked artificial insemination because the husband never gave written consent, said: "Parliament thought the decision by a man to create life after his death is a matter of such ethical complexity and importance that it should only be taken in a formal manner."

He added that Parliament had balanced opposing views over the ethics of fertility treatment by imposing safeguards, the most important of which was written consent. "There should be no room for uncertainty or doubt about what the man was agreeing to," *Letters*, page 17

Willie Carson goes home

The jockey, Willie Carson, has left North Hampshire Hospital in Basingstoke, less than a fortnight after he almost died in a frightening accident at Newbury race course.

Mr Myrddin Rees, consultant surgeon, said: "Mr Carson has made excellent progress and is well enough to leave hospital. He will be kept under review." Carson was kicked by his intended mount, Meshed, in the paddock.

EU rules bear fruit

The Asda supermarket chain announced it was giving thousands of apples away - because European law forbade their sale.

Asda will give an English Cox to the first 1,000 children visiting each of its stores up and down the country on Saturday. The gesture is in protest at EU legislation which says apples with a diameter of less than 55mm are too small to be sold.

Driver's 'grisly souvenirs'

Stuart Morgan, accused of murdering the French student Celine Figard, kept a cache of his victim's belongings hidden behind a wall in his garage, Worcester Crown Court was told yesterday.

Detectives found photographs of the 19-year-old student, as well as a letter from her cousin, her toilet bag, and a camera.

But their most "grisly finds" were a heavily blood-soaked bunk and its cover, removed from Mr Morgan's lorry, and several rolls of adhesive tape, which were shown by forensic tests to match that found on Celine's wrists, it was alleged.

New evidence links milk to diabetes

Fresh evidence for the controversial theory that cow's milk may cause diabetes in infants is revealed today. Writing in *The Lancet*, researchers at Rome University and St Bartholomew's Hospital in London say they have identified diabetes with immune cells that appear primed to attack a cow's milk protein, butyrasein.

Insulin-dependent diabetes develops when the body's immune system destroys the beta-cells in the pancreas that make insulin. No one knows why this auto-immune reaction happens. But one theory is that feeding an infant cow's milk can stimulate the child's immune system to react to certain milk proteins.

These milk proteins closely resemble others found on the surface of insulin-producing beta-cells. As a result, the child's immune system is tricked into attacking and eventually destroying them. *Glenda Cooper*

Duchess drops book action

The Duchess of York has dropped legal action to block publication of a controversial new book about her life, the publishers said yesterday.

The duchess took out an injunction against publication of Dr Allan Starkie's *Fergie, Her Secret Life*, dubbed "the book she tried to ban". Publishers Michael O'Mara Books said the duchess had backed away after being asked to lodge £500,000 with the court in case she lost the action. The book will now be published on 4 November.

Boy describes head's death

A teenage boy yesterday told the Old Bailey how he went to help mortally wounded headmaster Philip Lawrence after an old school friend of his had stabbed him in the street.

The 16-year-old described how the headmaster's body went limp after the blow and how he saw blood on Mr Lawrence's hands as he helped him back to St George's Roman Catholic School in Maida Vale, north-west London. The boy said he was certain the defendant, who is charged with Mr Lawrence's murder and cannot be named for legal reasons, was the attacker.

Graffiti artist wins appeal

Graffiti vandal Simon Sunderland, who carried out an 18-month campaign of spray-painting public buildings and vehicles in South Yorkshire, was yesterday freed from a five-year jail sentence.

To loud applause and shouts of "Yes!" from Sunderland's supporters, the Court of Appeal accepted he had learned his lesson and "found a sense of purpose and direction in his art". Appeal judge Mr Justice Rousley said the sentence was "out of kilter" with the offence.

McWhirter stands down

Norris McWhirter, editor of the *Guinness Book of Records* from 1954 to 1986 and editorial adviser until 1996, is resigning as a director of Guinness Publishing, his last association with the world's highest-selling copyright book. Mr McWhirter, 71, founded the book with his late twin brother, Russ, 42 years ago, since when it has sold more than 80 million copies in 350 editions and 37 languages.

"I want to spend more time on other projects. I am working on two new reference books, one about inventors and inventions, the other about the 1,043 islands around Britain," he said.

READ HOW FAR WOMEN'S RIGHTS HAVE COME IN 50 YEARS. IT'S A SHORT ARTICLE.

Women have made lots of advances over the last 50 years - but not enough. In this week's *Radio Times* Polly Toynbee talks about the battles still to be won.

RadioTimes

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU EXPECT.

The Bob and Paula show begins in tears



Helping hand: Paula Yates and her solicitor, Mark Stephens, outside the High Court yesterday

Photograph: David Rose

MICHAEL STREETER

The Bob and Paula show resumed yesterday when the former showbiz couple took the custody battle for their three children to the Family Division of the High Court. The world's media turned out in great force to greet the pair, who divorced acrimoniously when Ms Yates started a new relationship with pop singer Michael Hutchence.

First to arrive for the hearing in Court 45 Bob Geldof, dressed in a three-piece tweed suit and sporting a dejected scowl, who entered quietly through the back door of the Royal Courts of Justice away from most journalists.

His ex-wife, Paula Yates, 34, who recently returned from Australia to, in her words "fight for her children" faced a barrage of photographers and cameramen as she entered the courts through the main entrance.

With the photographers jockeying for the best shot, the scene rapidly descended into near chaos. In the ensuing mêlée a camera was broken, a photographer was cut and the Yates entourage briefly walked down a dead-end into the Lions Den - the photographers' enclosure. Eventually a court policeman led Ms Yates to the court precincts.

The one-time television presenter, whose new partner is in Australia promoting his band, INXS, and by whom she has a two-month old daughter, Heavenly Hiraani, was in tears after running the media gauntlet.

Attired in a simple black dress, dark sunglasses and drop pearl earrings she too made no comment on this latest stage in the Yates-Geldof saga.

The three-hour and 20-minute hearing, which adjourned at 4.15, was in decide who gets temporary custody of their three children, Fifi Tribuella, 13, Fesches, aged six, and four-year-old Pixie, until full proceedings are heard.

Last week 41-year-old Mr Geldof won a temporary injunction concerning the three children. That injunction followed news of an alleged drugs bust at his former wife and new partner's London residence.

The hearing continues today.



Ten years that shaped the world

Next week we'll be celebrating our tenth anniversary with a week of special features on the great events and people in news, sport, business and the arts who have shaped the world in the past decade. Britain's most innovative newspaper will also be bringing you a lively new Section Two, and a great new Saturday package.

Literature award: Polish writer of slim volumes commended for wealth of inspiration

Poetry's Mozart is Nobel winner

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Arts Correspondent

A Polish poet whose work is a closed book to most of the British literati yesterday won the \$1.12m (£750,000) Nobel Prize for Literature and found herself thrust into an unwelcome spotlight.

Wisława Szymborska, described by the judges as the Mozart of poetry, was apprehensive at the prospect of world fame when tracked down to a hotel for writers at a Polish mountain resort.

"This is a difficult situation. I am normally a very private person and now I foresee some difficult moments," Szymborska said. "I am very pleased for Polish literature although there are other poets like me in Poland."

Asked whether she would now appear more frequently in public and give lectures, the slight, grey-haired poet said she might travel but added: "No, I never give lectures."

Szymborska has written only a handful of slim volumes of poetry since 1957, and her relative obscurity in the West is partly because her work's stylistic variety makes it hard to translate.

The Swedish Academy said cryptically that it had chosen to honour Szymborska for "poetry that with ironic precision allows the historical and biological context to come to light in fragments of human reality."

It added: "She has been described as the Mozart of po-

etry, not without justice in view of her wealth of inspiration and the veritable ease with which her words seem to fall into place."

A typical example of her writing could be found at the end of a poem called "The Joy of Writing":

*The joy of writing
Power of preserving
The revenge of a mortal hand.*

The award surprised some observers, who had expected a novelist to be chosen after the Irish poet Seamus Heaney - also on holiday when the award was announced - won last year's prize.

Clare Cavanagh, a University of Wisconsin lecturer who has translated Szymborska into English, said: "She turns out under this modest and witty surface to be a very great poet."

"She's a very exceptional combination. She's a great philosopher on one hand but on the other hand has mass appeal in Poland."

From 1953 to 1981 Szymborska was on the staff of the intellectual Polish magazine *Zycie Literackie* (Literary Life). She is the fifth Pole or Polish-born writer to win the literature prize since it was first awarded to the Frenchman Sully Prudhomme in 1901.

Her forerunners are Henryk Sienkiewicz in 1905, Wladyslaw Reymont in 1924, the Polish-born novelist Isaac Bashevis Singer in 1978 and Czeslaw Milosz in 1980. The last two had become American citizens.



Wisława Szymborska: 'I am a very private person'

'Her poems are subtle, cool: little miracles of elegant sophistication'

Our literary editor on on a dark-eyed 73-year-old with a muse to win over the world



JOHN WALSH

for a few years. The former is the globally renowned singer, whose name was put before the Nobel jury for the first time this year by an American academic and fan.

Very little is known outside her native Poland about 73-year-old Ms Szymborska, a poet, translator and critic. Her British publishers, Forest Books and Bloodaxe Books, could offer biographical data from her books but nothing more. Back in Poland, however, she is mentioned in the same respectful tones as her countrymen Zbigniew Herbert and Czeslaw Milosz (who won the Nobel in 1980).

She was born in 1923 in

Bnin, near Poznan in western Poland. At the age of eight, her family moved to Krakow, where she lives still. When Poland was occupied during the war, Szymborska defied Nazi injunctions to attend school classes in Polish.

In 1945 she studied Polish literature and sociology at the Jagiellonian Institute in Krakow, abandoning her course when it fell a victim to Stalinist interference. In 1953, at the age of 30, she joined the weekly literary magazine *Zycie Literackie* as poetry editor and columnist and worked on it until 1981.

She has published ten volumes of verse: *That's Why We're*

Alive (1952), *Questioning Oneself* (1954), *Calling the Yell* (1957), *Salt* (1962), *A Hundred Joys* (1967), *Chance* (1972), *A Great Number* (1976), *People on a Bridge* (1986) and *View with a Grain of Sand* (1995).

Her poems are light in idiom, subtle, cool and witty, but deeply serious in their concerns. For a woman who has survived war and dictatorship, they are little miracles of elegant sophistication. They traverse historical periods and mythological civilisations to compare everyday experiences, in the style of the Greek poet Constantine Cavafy and deal in lists and litanies, like Louis MacNeice.

In her most recent collection, *View With a Grain of Sand* (to be published in three weeks by Faber & Faber, who signed a deal with her American publishers at the Frankfurt Book Fair yesterday, she writes with feeling about self-consciousness, as in the poem published here, *In Praise of Feeling Bad About Yourself*.



David Szymborska

In Praise of Feeling Bad About Yourself

by Wisława Szymborska

The buzzard never says it is to blame.
The panther wouldn't know what scruples mean.
When the piranha strikes, it feels no shame.
If snakes had hands, they'd claim their hands were clean.
A jackal doesn't understand remorse.
Lions and lice don't waver in their course.
Why should they, when they know they're right?
Though hearts of killer whales may weigh a ton,
In every other way they're light.
On this third planet of the sun,
among the signs of bestiality
A clear conscience is Number One

Translation by Stanislaw Baranek and Clare Cavanagh

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Graffiti vandal has jail sentence cut

A graffiti vandal who carried out an 18-month spray-painting campaign was granted his freedom yesterday from a five-year jail sentence.

The Court of Appeal accepted that Simon Sunderland, of Sheffield, had learnt his les-

son and "found a sense of purpose and direction in his art". Mr Justice Rousley said the five-year sentence was "out of kilter" and more appropriate to an offence of street mugging. The judges substituted a two-year sentence, which taking into ac-

count time on remand, means he will be freed in a few days.

Sunderland - whose trademark was a clenched fist and the name Fisto - was given the "deterrant" sentence at Sheffield Crown Court in March after admitting criminal damage.

news

LABOUR IN BLACKPOOL

Law and order: Mother asks for total ban on handguns, while Straw highlights drug-related crime

Tears flow at Dunblane plea

ANTHONY BEVINS
Political Editor

Delegates wept at the Labour Party conference yesterday as they listened to an impassioned plea for a ban on all handguns to prevent a repeat of the Dunblane massacre.

In a moving speech that opened and ended with standing ovations, Ann Pearson, organiser of the Dunblane Snowdrop Campaign, said there could be no compromise.

"Yesterday was a little girl's sixth birthday. She got cards and flowers, but she wasn't there to blow the candles out on her cake."

"She was Sophie North. Compromise cost her her life."

Urging Labour to take one little step further from its current policy - banning private ownership and possession of handguns, but leaving open the possibility of keeping them in gun clubs - Ms Pearson called for a total ban.

"Ban them from homes," she said. "Ban them from gun clubs. Ban them from our society."

When Thomas Hamilton had gone into the Dunblane primary school, he had had 743 rounds of ammunition; enough to kill

every pupil and teacher, she said.

"His ear muffs served a dual purpose: to lessen the noise of gun shot, but also to block out a noise he would not have been used to on the target range: the scream of terrified infants."

"He fired at the children and the teachers as if at targets - some of which received seven bullets - some fired at point-blank range, down into them where they lay injured."

"He fired at injured children as they tried to crawl away - again and again and again. Three minutes, one pistol, 105 bullets fired, 17 dead, 14 injured and one child who stood and watched it all. And an entire community cut down emotionally."

"Those who survived were conscious throughout. On 13th March, Hamilton inflicted on the innocent people of Dunblane, 17 death sentences and multiple life sentences. There will be no reprieve, no parole for good behaviour, no right of appeal against his decision."

Labour said last night that it had left the door open to a ban on handguns being kept in clubs, pending the findings of Lord Cullen's report into the

Dunblane massacre. But Ms Pearson said: "Leave handguns in clubs and a planner like Hamilton will just book them out for a competition, or put them in his pocket and walk out."

"We must shut the door on public safety tight - so that it can't be pushed wider by the very powerful gun lobby in years to come."

The vicious circle of drug-related crime, in which property worth more than £1bn is stolen to finance the habit, will be tackled by a Labour government, the shadow Home Secretary, Jack Straw, promised.

"Once, crime happened to someone else," Mr Straw said. "Today, it happens to us all. Recorded crime has doubled in the last 17 years. Today, there'll be 50,000 crimes committed; that's one crime every two seconds."

However, he said that there were fewer greater challenges to law and order than drugs-related crime. With addicts thieving daily to fund their drug-taking - "at a cost of well over £1bn in property stolen by them each year" - Mr Straw said that Labour would introduce a pilot project to force drug-addicted offenders to undergo treatment.



Impassioned plea: Ann Pearson calling for a total ban on handguns Photograph: Reuters

Payback time as Jack turns on tormentors

Tory home secretaries used to be unpopular with their conferences for refusing to heed calls for hanging, flogging and castrating. Jack Straw has successfully inverted this tradition, making Labour delegates uncomfortable by enthusiastically supporting toughness.

These days, he told conference "crime happens to us all". But once, it "happened to someone else". I know what he means. In Edwardian times, marauding gangs of British yobs did not rush around country towns smashing things and beating up black people. They went to Africa to do all that.

Jack looks like the bright guy with glasses who was pushed around at school. Bullies threw his cap in the canal, flicked ink pellets at him, and scrawled in his meticulously neat exercise books. And now, 35 years later, it's payback time.

First to go will be the nasty neighbours, sorted out, evicted and replaced by families called Straw and Blair, who will organise Neighbourhood Watch, water your patio plants when you go away, and tap on the window if you put your rubbish on the wrong day.

Things are in trouble too. No more endless cautions from over-worked constables. Instead there will be one Final Warning. This sounds appropriately ominous, and in the absence of any detail I imagine that after a Final Warning has been transgressed, bounty hunters and neighbourhood posses will be allowed to hunt offenders down and treat them to summary justice.

It sounds great. As an inveterate window-tapper myself I endorse all this. I have a quibble with Jack about his drugs policy, which he announced yesterday, and which is about getting tough on addicts who commit crime.

My quibble is that this is destined to no greater success than



DAVID AARONOVITCH

all the other failed measures in the great Prohibition against illegal drugs. And such strictures also seem a bit rich at a conference where vast quantities of alcohol have been consumed. In fact, so much has been drunk that when Michael Meacher referred this week to a "clamp down on [exhaust] belching monsters", a large number of hung-over delegates looked rather sheepish.

Mr Straw also said this: "Our promise to the British people is to create a society where old people are not terrified when they answer the door." Really? And how will Labour control these feelings of terror? Jack, I say this to you, governments do not create societies. People create societies. That's why the drugs policy will not work.

And that's also why there was so much nervousness at the heart of the discussions about devolution yesterday. Why should there be all this worry about a tax-raising parliament? After *Braveheart*, are they afraid of Scottish voters saying: "I dinnae being hung, wi' me insides cut out and burned in front o' my face, but I'm no paying another penny tae the taxman?"

Apparently any suggestion that there might be higher taxes in Scotland will cause a "Bathgate today, Bath tomorrow" reaction.

But this is a fig-leaf to cover Scots nakedness. Everybody in Middle England that I've ever met wishes them and their parliament well, just so long as they shut up about it.

Short helps defeat vote on Trident

Labour's rejection of unilateral nuclear disarmament was confirmed yesterday when Clare Short helped the party leadership defeat a last attempt before the election by CND supporters to commit Labour to scrapping the Trident nuclear weapon system, writes Colin Brown.

Calling on the conference to reject the move, Ms Short dismissed claims that £2bn could be diverted to schools and hospitals, and said most of the money would have been spent. "There are no savings to be made by scrapping Trident. Under our policy, we use our weapons to get rid of more weapons. This must be a better way to use our influence," she said.

The move to scrap Trident was supported by the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, and a number of constituencies. Chris Farnell, of Orpington, south London, said scrapping Trident would set an example to the other nuclear powers and encourage them to do away with their own weapons. Supporting

him, Len Easton, of Peterborough Constituency Labour Party, asked: "Who is the enemy we are defending ourselves from?"

Trade unions, dockyard constituencies worried about the loss of jobs, and Labour's front bench, led by Ms Short and David Clark, the defence spokesman, united in defeating the unilateralist motion by 56.35 per cent to 43.65 per cent in a card vote. Tony Blair's grip on the party was reinforced as the constituencies voted 22.7 per cent for unilateralism, compared with 27.2 per cent against.

The unions voted 20 per cent for, and 29 per cent against. But Ms Short, spokeswoman for overseas development, also made a veiled attack on modernisers such as Kim Howells for suggesting the word "socialist" should be disposed of. "How can anyone suggest socialism is no longer relevant when one-quarter of the world lives in abject poverty and the number is growing as the world gets richer?" she asked.

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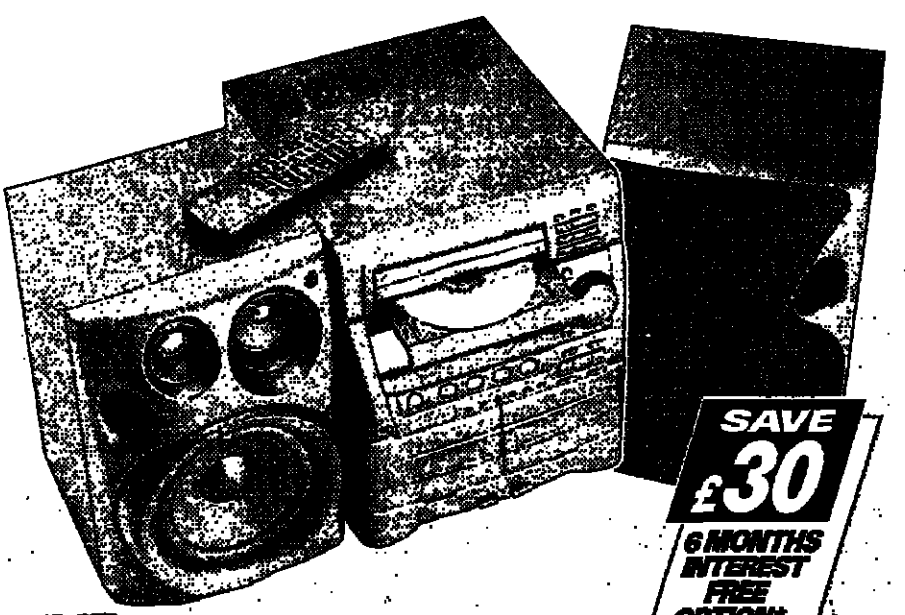


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MATSUI MCH-650 ULTRA-COMPACT CD MICRO HI-FI • Programmable CD. Was £299.99. SALE PRICE £189.99 SAVE £110	JVC UD50 MULTIPLAY CD MICRO HI-FI • 2-track design. • Auto-reverse. Was £299.99. SALE PRICE £279.99 SAVE £20

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Tory peers warned on Scots rule

STEPHEN GOODWIN

The Conservatives were warned yesterday not to use their majority in the House of Lords to obstruct a Labour government's plans for a Scottish parliament.

Burying some of the party's recent disarray over home rule with a forceful speech in the democracy reform debate, George Robertson, the shadow Scottish secretary, said Labour meant business.

"We will finish John Smith's unfinished business and legislate for a Scottish parliament in

the first year of a Labour government," he promised.

The single referendum which Labour has settled on to precede a devolution Bill could bring an early clash between a Tony Blair administration and the Lords, which Labour is pledged to reform.

Mr Robertson noted that John Major had already threatened to use the Lords to obstruct a one-clause referendum Bill. "The very fact that they are forced to wield the blunt broadsword of the back-woods battalions of the dukes, earls

and viscounts shows that they have lost the democratic argument and they know it," he said.

In a challenge which drew the loudest applause of the debate, Mr Robertson warned: "If they use the power of the peers we will use the power of the people and the people's will will prevail."

The Parliament Act of 1911 gives the Commons power to over-rule the Lords after only a matter of months. But Mr Blair is also committed to removing the right of hereditary peers to vote – a reform which

could be hastened if the referendum Bill was put at risk.

There is a growing belief in Westminster that a "Yes" vote in the referendum would be used as justification for gutting the main devolution Bill though the Commons. Constitutional measures are not normally subject to time-tables, giving an opposition and rebels ample scope for delaying tactics.

Mr Robertson rounded on SNP members who had vilified him at their conference in Inverness last week. They had displayed the darker side

to nationalism. "What we saw there was raw chauvinism," he said. "Chauvinism at its worst – ugly, intolerant, nasty – and it should have no place in Scottish politics or in any decent society."

There was virtually no criticism of Mr Robertson and the party leadership for the policy somersaults over the referendum. "We had two weeks of confusion and then got it right," said Allan Wilson of Cunningham North. "The Tories have had 17 years of power and they've still got it hopelessly and arrogantly wrong."

The conference endorsed plans for a Welsh assembly and a two-stage strategy for regional government in England. Regional chambers based on local authorities would be set up followed by directly elected regional governments where there was a demand for it.

Such super-councils would not have powers to tax or legislate but would run many of the currently unelected regional departments. Labour believes the change would make bidding for funding from Europe easier.

The goal of youth goes straight past Blair

Tony Blair left the conference yesterday lunchtime and joined Alex Ferguson to play football with pupils at Devonshire Primary School, Blackpool, writes John Rentoul.

Wearing a sports jacket in the colours of his local Newcastle United team, Mr Blair teamed up with the manager of rivals Manchester United in goal, while a team of 10- and 11-year-olds showed no mercy in blasting penalties past them.

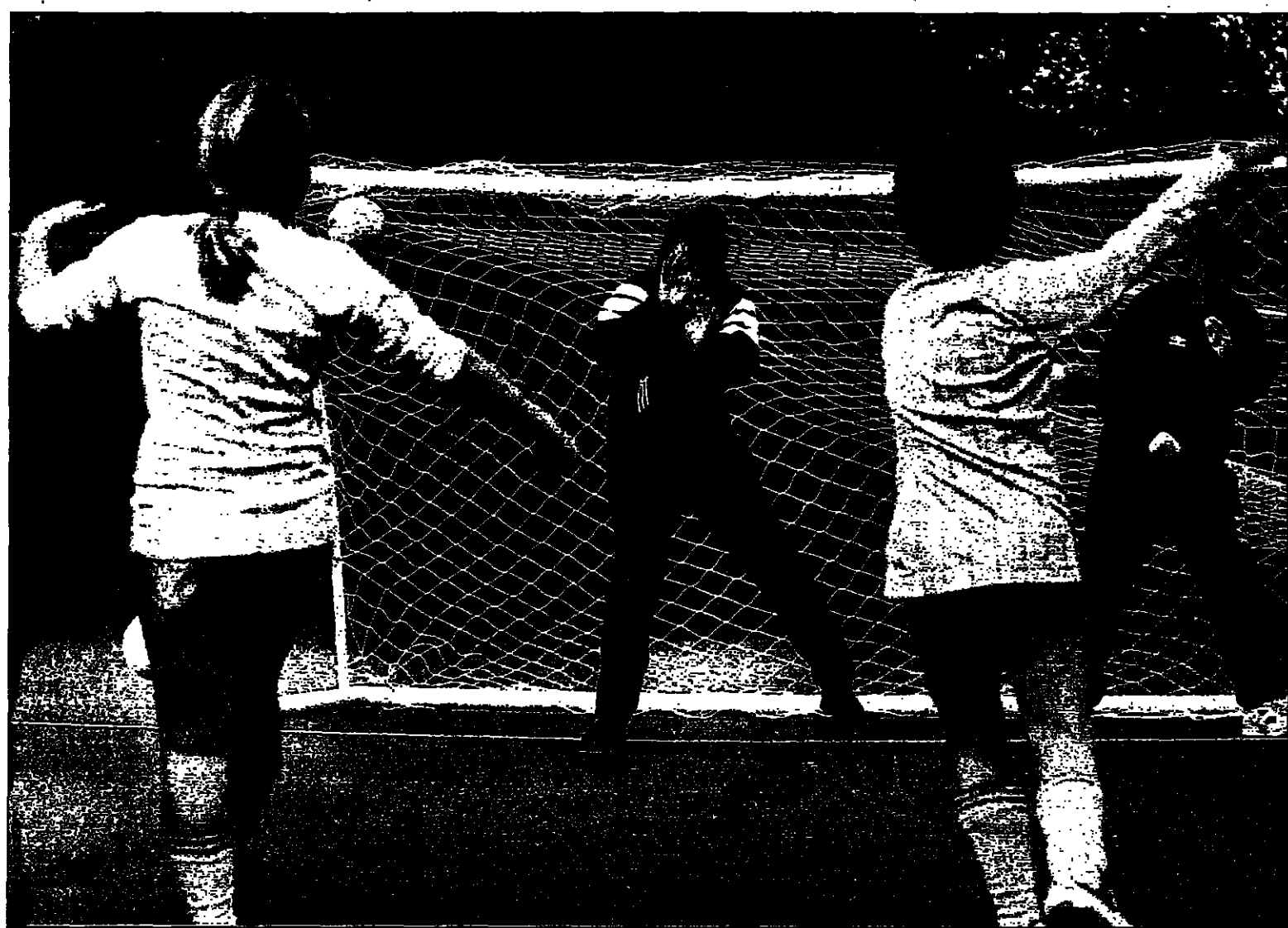
The Labour leader was unable to match his 26 consecutive headers in a similar photo-opportunity with Kevin Keegan, Newcastle manager, during last year's conference.

The girls, champions of the local league, were practising for their first match of the season. "It's probably better fun than sitting in the conference hall," Mr Blair said, nursing bruised fingers.

Mr Ferguson, long a Labour supporter and a member of the party's 1,000 Club whose members give £1,000 to its funds, praised the party's plans to encourage sport.

It was an event designed to present Mr Blair as in touch with the aspirations of youth, which on this occasion were mainly to get Mr Ferguson's autograph.

It was his second photo-call of the day, after meeting soldiers of the Queen's Lancashire Reg-



The firing line: The children putting them past Tony Blair and Alex Ferguson yesterday

Photograph: Brian Harris

iment on the seafloor. In a bizarre reversal of the relationship between spin doctors and the media, press photographers "went on strike" and boycotted that event, because Mr Blair refused to get into a

tank. When it emerged that he would only be shaking hands with squaddies, who stood to attention and called him "Sir", they downed Nikons.

The "strikers" claimed to be making a stand against Labour

"stage management", despite the fact that they wanted to Mr Blair to pose for an even more staged picture – as Margaret Thatcher and the failed US presidential candidate Michael Dukakis had done before him.

Take the Grand Tour without leaving these shores. Page 7

MAIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ban on private ownership and possession of handguns, a cut on under-18s holding any kind of gun

Random drug testing for ex-convicts who are former criminals

Repeal of the 1975 Electoral System Act

QUOTES OF THE DAY

"Compromises cost lives, Mr Blair. As a former organiser of the Snowdrop petition to ban handguns, of Sophie North, killed in Dunblane, who would have been six this week."

"I really respect Mr. P. Blair. I fought against Franco and all that. It's just the son I can't stand." Rodney Broun, leader of Unison

"I don't think I have made any financial commitments, have I?" Robin Cook, when a journalist's blazer went off in the middle of his fringe speech

"Labour's Coming Home." Please Note Change of Address. Tribune headline

"I put this to the Tories. If you don't want the streets, don't take the Tories." Jack Straw

"If lesbians and gays cannot be in the military, would it be fair to possibly have a gay defence secretary?" Alan Doble, Harrow and Wood Green

GOOD DAY

Theresa May

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THE CROWD-PULLERS ON THE FRINGE

European Movement with Robin Cook, GMB union leader John Edmonds and Euro-AMPS leader Wayne Davies. 300 people

Alex Ferguson, Man Utd manager, on the future of football. 100+ in a tiny room at the Clifton hotel

PRINTING ERROR OF THE DAY

Amidst the media's coverage of the "designations of Israeli settlements as 'settlements'", did they mean "settlements"?

THE PARTY TO BE SEEN AT

"London and Continental Railways, Imperial Hotel, the champagne at last"

SIGHTINGS

Jeremy Jones, actor

David Webster, chairman designate of Salford plc

SP Peter Bonfield, chief executive of BT

RAPTUREMETER

Jack Straw (home affairs) 34 sec 91 decibels

George Robertson (Scotland) 34 sec 91 decibels

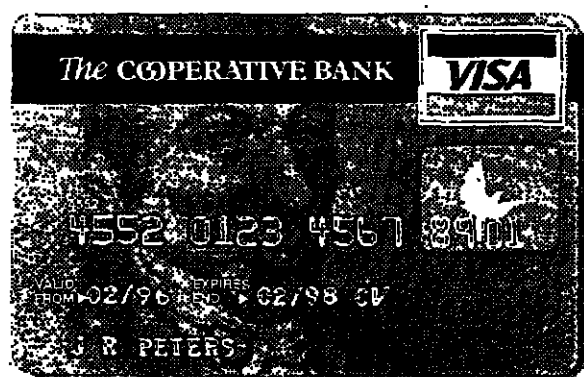
Chris Smith (overseas aid) 22 sec 89 decibels

TODAY'S BUSINESS

Votes on policy-making and role of conference; deputy leader's speech

Compiled by John Rentoul

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AND AT SELECTED CINEMAS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Tate wins £5m watercolour collection in Lottery bonanza

DAVID LISTER

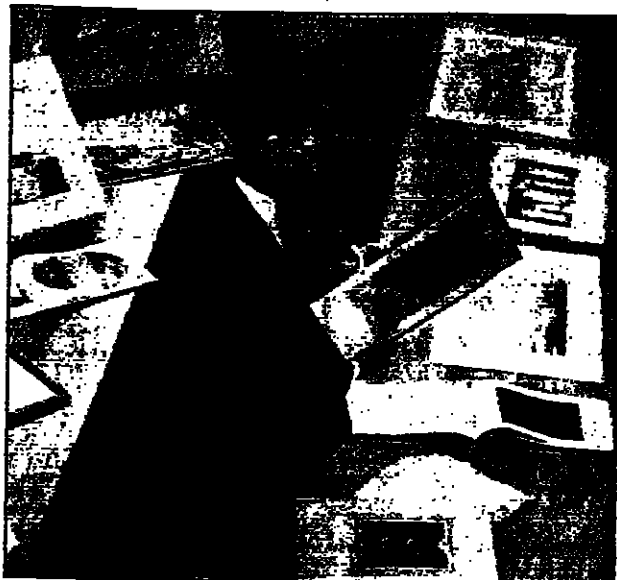
The Tate Gallery has acquired a £5m watercolour collection, deemed to be one of the most significant collections of British watercolours and drawings to have remained in private hands.

The collection contains around 3,000 works and was put together by Paul Oppé, a distinguished scholar and collector, during the first half of this century. Its greatest strength is in late 18th-century landscape watercolours and drawings, which reflect the "Golden Age" of British watercolours.

Many are views of Italy and Switzerland produced in the era of the "grand tour" by artists including Richard Wilson, Francis Towne, J.R. Cozens and John "Warwick" Smith.

The Tate will show 100 works from the collection in September 1997 and plans eventually to increase the opening hours of its Study Room to five days a week to make the collection accessible to the public.

Nicholas Serota, director of the Tate, said yesterday: "There has never been anything on the scale of this acquisition. In



Nicholas Serota, director of the Tate Gallery, examines some of the new acquisitions. They include (from left): *Self-Portrait* (1984) by Andy Warhol; *Death Giving George Taylor a Cross-Buttock* by William Hogarth (1697-1764); *The Source of the Arveiron* (1781) by Francis Towne and a detail from *Salta nel mio Sacco* (1984) by Frank Stella

terms of size, the Oppé Collection consists of 3,000 works, which is unparalleled.

"It has been made possible only by the existence of Lottery funds. This is precisely the kind of collection which, had it come

on to the market five years ago, would have been broken up and sold in separate pieces.

"We have acquired a group of works for the nation for a very good figure. It is money well spent."

Parts of the collection will go on display in four venues around Britain in the next few years, including Cambridge, Edinburgh and Cardiff.

Paul Oppé died in 1957 and his world-famous collection of

watercolours, drawings, oil sketches and prints has been held privately until now.

Its acquisition was arranged through a special agreement negotiated through Sotheby's, and was made possible with a

Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £3,776,000 and £100,000 from the National Art Collections Fund. A further lottery grant of £250,000 will support the collection's conservation, cataloguing and the cost of mount-

ing temporary exhibitions of highlights of the collection around the UK.

The Tate's director, Nicholas Serota, also announced a gift by Janet Wolfson de Botton of 56 works by contemporary Euro-

pean and American artists, including Andy Warhol's 1986 *Self-Portrait* and Gilbert and George's *Red Morning Trouble*.

The Tate has galleries in London, Liverpool and St Ives, Cornwall.

Ireland 'is too easy on its writers'

CLARE GARNER

Frankfurt

The Irish author of a new biography of Samuel Beckett said last night it was too easy to get published in Ireland, arguing that state subsidy and patronage was too generous.

Anthony Cronin, whose biography of Beckett has just been published, sounded a note at variance with the theme of the Frankfurt Book Fair, "Ireland and its Diaspora", and the address by Irish president, Mary Robinson.

The Irish participation at the fair has more than doubled this year. The country where writing is occasionally called "the national affliction" was selected as the fair's focal theme and this encouraged 35 of the 60 publishing houses active in Ireland to attend, many of them for the first time.

Last night the poet, fiction writer, critic and biographer Anthony Cronin, told the *Independent* there were three reasons why people were leaving Ireland: "Sunlight, booze and sex".

"You may think that in Ireland we have more booze than we know what to do with, but it's not true. Nice drinks in sunlight are different from nice drinks in a poky pub," he said. "Sunlight still is a big draw."

I suppose sex and booze are more available at home, but the combination of all three in a Mediterranean climate is a good thing."

In her opening speech the Irish President Mary Robinson made a special plea for writers. "I think we should remember that the individual writer is the source and the focus here, and that the writer's life and experience is not easy, is still not secure, and still needs to be honoured and rewarded if we are to be certain of treasuring the energies and self-knowledge in our midst."

The book as an object, as a commercial venture, as a cultural opportunity loses all its resonance and meaning if we forget that," she said. The difficulty is, of course, that the world of publishing may seem to be infinitely convivial and public and festive.

"But the life of the writer is solitary and easily overlooked: we need to be careful not to make the first a distraction from the second."

But Mr Cronin, 68, begged to differ. "Maybe it's a bit too easy to be an Irish writer now," he said. "People now regard writing and artistic creation generally with a sort of approval which was certainly absent when I was growing up - and it's very very easy to be published."

Frankfurt Diary

John Gresham has a new novel out: *The Partner*. But there are rumours here that a new Gresham is waiting in the wings. The literary agent Darley Anderson is working hard to shape the career of "the Gresham of medical thrillers". Mr Anderson challenged Paul Carson, a 46-year-old Dublin doctor specialising in childhood asthma and allergy, to write a medical thriller. Mr Carson subsequently wrote *Scalpel* and Mr Anderson is now selling the rights. Louise Moore of Heinemann won the UK and Commonwealth rights for £44,000.

It's a must-have for anyone mystified by what young people today are most interested in. "Son of Disco", Alon Shulman's *Style Bible* warns: "No longer a counter-culture

movement, today's youth culture is now the movement... their style becomes everyone's style to one degree or another". His book, to be published by Methuen next autumn contains 1,000 definitions, from hip-hop to posh totty.

They have been round the world and now they are getting into rock. *The Rough Guide to Rock* is an up-to-date and positive guide to 1,056 bands. "It's not written by your average music hack who's been there, done that," said Richard Trillo, associate director.

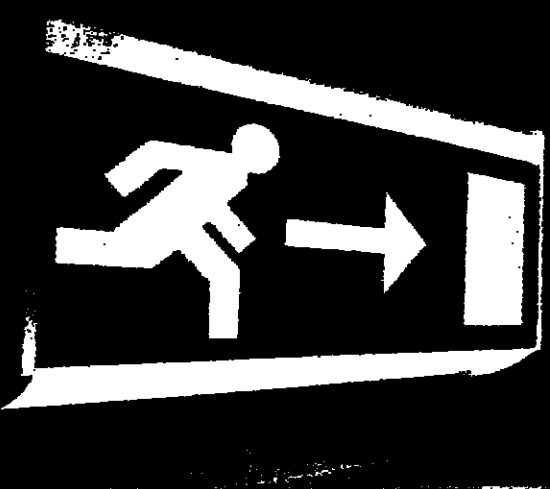
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news

SAS men are ordered never to write books

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

Every member of the SAS and SBS is to sign a personal contract undertaking never to publish details of their unit and the way they do their work without prior permission from the Ministry of Defence.

The plan is the MoD's response to the recent wave of books published by ex-members of the SAS. It fears that further disclosures could not only compromise special forces' tactics but also reveal top-secret operations that the Government would rather not admit to. The ministry said it has not yet decided whether it will also try to get former personnel to sign.

Every serving member of the elite units will be summoned before the Director of Special Forces – an Army brigadier – and told to sign a personal contract. If they refuse, they will be "RTU'd" – returned to their former units – the ultimate disgrace for anyone who has passed the demanding six months of selection tests and been "badged" as a member of the Army's Special Air Service, the Marines' Special Boat Service or the RAF Special Forces.

The new contracts involve a "contractually binding, lifelong, civil law obligation not to disclose any information about



Secrets out: Sir Peter de la Billiere (left) and Chris Ryan, whose books prompted the SAS confidentiality crackdown

the work of the UK Special Forces without specific prior authority."

All members of the Special Forces, including 22 SAS Regiment, based in Hereford, and the two Territorial Army SAS Regiments – 21 and 23 SAS – will be required to sign. So will the SBS, who carry out underwater sabotage and reconnaissance enemy coasts, and some members of the RAF.

Civil servants who work closely with the Special Forces are already considered to have an "enforceable duty of confidentiality".

Special forces' personnel are already sworn to secrecy but once they have left the services there is little the MoD can do

to prevent them publishing accounts of their experiences. The recent wave of disclosures began when General Sir Peter de la Billiere, the senior British officer in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf war and a former member of the SAS, published a book called *Storm Command*. In it, he gave details of SAS and SBS operations behind Iraqi lines, including the destruction and capture of an eight-man patrol, Bravo Two-Zero.

Two survivors of the patrol, using pseudonyms, subsequently published their own accounts, which became best sellers – *Bravo Two-Zero* by Andy McNab and *The One that Got Away* by Chris Ryan.

Former members of the Special Forces have signed the Official Secrets Act, and are also bound by Queen's Regulations and Crown Copyright. They also face the censure of their former comrades if they break the secretive ethos of the Special Forces.

Even so, the MoD has become increasingly concerned that unauthorised disclosures might take place, and has introduced the new contracts which will be a particular deterrent to potential publishers.

Besides the now well-known operations in the Falklands, the Gulf and Bosnia, British special forces have been extensively involved in Northern Ireland, against drug barons in South and Central America, and may also have worked in the former Soviet Union and Afghanistan.

Nevertheless, MoD sources admit there is still nothing to prevent an ex-SAS man publishing his memoirs abroad, raising the spectre of another *Spycatcher* fiasco. Last night the MoD said: "We will certainly seek to enforce the contracts wherever in the world we can".

Should an ex-member of the Special Forces break the contract, however, it is debatable whether a civil court would rule in the MoD's favour, given the difficulty of getting witnesses to testify.

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Hidden menace: Campaigners gathered in Trafalgar Square yesterday for a vigil drawing attention to the 26,000 people a year killed or maimed by landmines. They hope to persuade governments to agree a global ban. Photograph: Ralph Erle

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DAILY POEM

From The Small-Pox

By Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

The wretched Flavia, on her couch reclined,
Thus breathed the anguish of a wounded mind.
A glass reversed in her right hand she bore,
For now she shunned the face she sought before.
"How am I changed! alas! how am I grown
A frightful spectre, to myself unknown!
Where's my complexion? where the radiant bloom,
That promised happiness for years to come?
Then, with what pleasure I this face surveyed!
To look once more, my visits oft delayed!
Charmed with the view, a fresher red would rise,
And a new life shot sparkling from my eyes!
Ah! faithless glass, my wanted bloom restore!
Alas! I rave, that bloom is now no more!"

"The greatest good the gods on men bestow,
Ev'n youth itself, to me is useless now:
There was a time (oh! that I could forget)
When opera-tickets poured before my feet,
And at the Ring, where brightest beauties shine,
The earliest charries of the spring were mine...
Now beauty's fled, and presents are no more."

At worst fatal, at best woefully disfiguring, smallpox was one of the most feared diseases of medieval and modern Europe. In the 16th century it affected half of the Tudors and their court. Edward Jenner, at the close of the 18th century, observed that milkmaids were spared on account of developing cowpox first; 80 years previously Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who had suffered herself, witnessed the practice of smallpox inoculation in Constantinople by the introduction of pus from sores into the bloodstream, and bravely tried it on her son. She published her findings in 1722. In 1980, the World Health Organisation declared that smallpox had finally been eliminated. This poem appears in *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets*, edited by Roger Lonsdale, published by OUP at £10.99.

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international

Europe: Momentum is building for monetary union in 1999, but political integration will be postponed until next century

Kohl submits to delay on integration

Prodi fights for Italy's credibility

SARAH HELM
Brussels

Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, has admitted publicly for the first time that Europe may have to postpone its drive for further integration until after the single currency.

Speaking before tomorrow's European summit in Dublin, Mr Kohl said that if the talks on reforming the Maastricht treaty - known as "Maastricht 2" - make little progress, there would have to be a "Maastricht 3" conference at a later date.

Until now Mr Kohl has always stated that he believes further European political union must go hand in hand with monetary union. However, his latest remarks suggest he now accepts that Europe does not have the stomach for the upheaval of both monetary union and further political union at the same time.

Indications that Mr Kohl, the leading integrationist, is toning down his ambitions for immediate reform of the European Union will be welcomed by John Major, who has argued for a limited agenda from the start. Among the most far-reaching questions of reform probably to be delayed to Maastricht 3 - which would start well after the next general election - would be an increase in majority voting, one of the most contentious issues for the Tory government.

Mr Major will join his European partners in Dublin tomorrow when the reform timetable will be on the agenda.

In another sign of lowering expectations, there has been growing support within the EU

for postponing the conclusion of the current round of the Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) until the end of Luxembourg's presidency in December 1997. It had been widely anticipated that the conclusion would take place under the Dutch presidency in Amsterdam in June 1997. France, in particular, has been hinting that Europe should reduce its ambitions for the IGC and set-



John Major: Will welcome more limited agenda

tle for a "short, sharp" series of reforms, and return to the wider questions of integration later.

In Dublin this week Mr Kohl made it clear that he has not given up his drive for greater political union. He stressed that further European integration was both irreversible and vital for peace and prosperity. However, when asked what would happen if the current round of IGC talks should fail, Mr Kohl said that if the discussions "do not solve all the problems, then there will be a Maastricht 3."

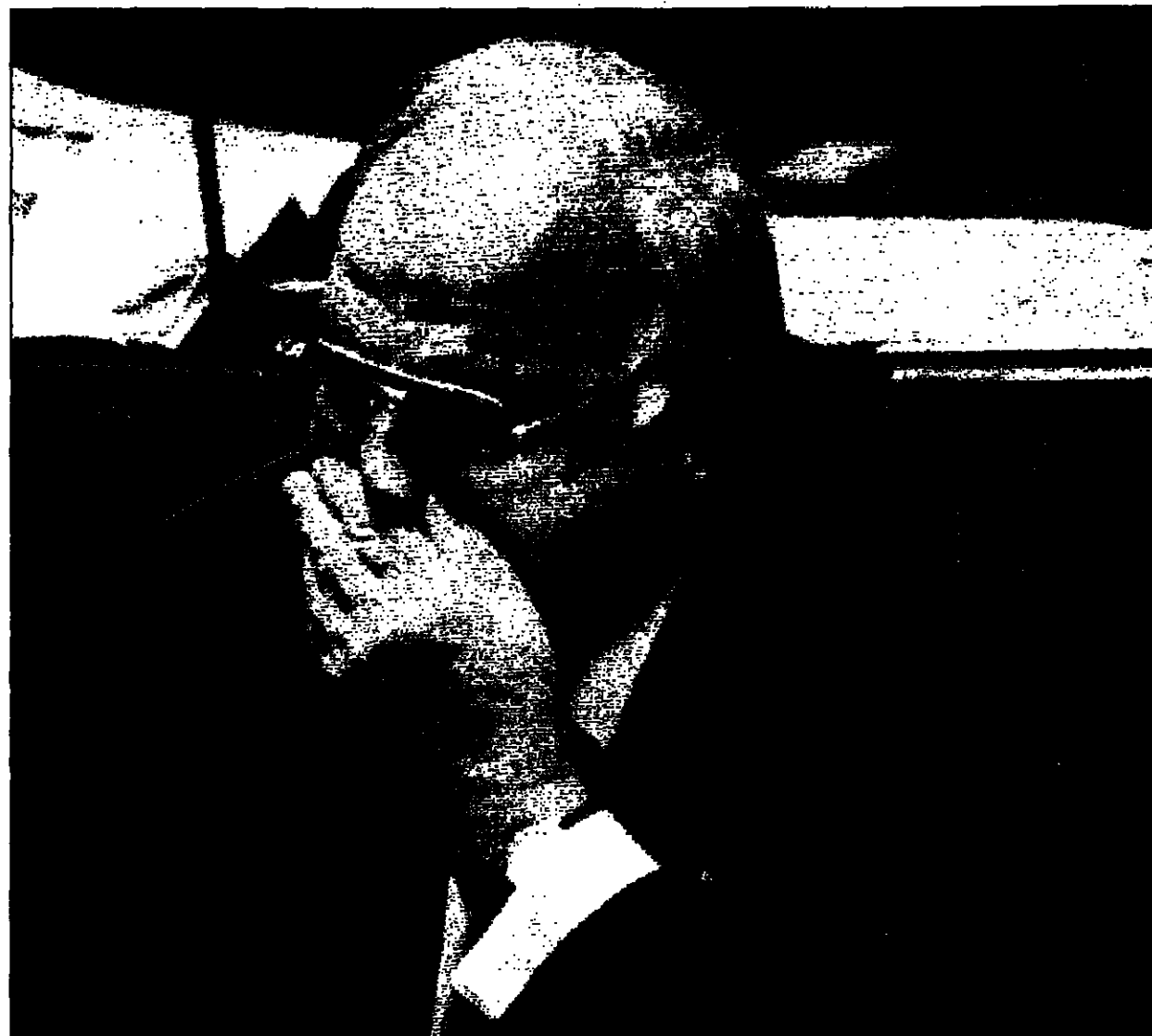
Mr Kohl's comments come as little surprise to those who have been closely involved in the present round of IGC discussions. For several months diplomats have been commenting on the deep malaise which surrounds the talks, which have become little more than a "paper chase". "Texts have been produced on every issue you can think of. But there is no political impetus to think big," one EU official said.

The idea of the current IGC, launched amid great fanfare in Turin in March, was to re-write the 1991 Maastricht treaty in order to modernise and retune the EU's institutions to produce more integration and more efficiency in preparation for the accession of new member states from Eastern Europe early in the next millennium.

However, the IGC negotiations have been hampered by a lack of political impetus from their leaders. Not only in Britain, but in several other member states, public opinion has signalled growing disquiet with the speed of integration.

It is widely acknowledged that major reform will probably now not happen until the enlargement of the union is a reality. "When those countries are really knocking on the door, then the political will to make the reforms might be there," an EU diplomat said yesterday.

At the same time, it is accepted in many capitals that the task of seeing through the change to a single currency, due to be launched in 1999, will be so overwhelming that other forms of political reform will have to be limited.



Chancellor Helmut Kohl: Toning down his ambitions for immediate political reform Photograph: Hermann Knippertz

ANDREW GUMBEL
Rome

Will Romano Prodi go down in history as the prime minister who catapulted Italy into European monetary union in record time, or the man who messed it all up?

With his governing coalition growing restive, parliament sharpening its knives to debate his tax-ridden budget proposals, and Jacques Chirac arriving for a highly uncomfortable bilateral summit, the Italian premier was battling yesterday not only to preserve his country's credibility, but also his own.

Mr Prodi has been at the eye of a pan-European storm ever since he decided last week to ditch Italy's carefully laid public finance plans in favour of an austerity budget that he promised would be enough to qualify Italy for the single European currency from the word go.

First, Mr Prodi himself admitted that it would take as much luck as judgement for the budget to bring the country's public finances even remotely into line with the Maastricht criteria. Then Mr Chirac rubbed salt into the wounds by stating flatly that Italy would not be in the initial line-up - a remark which sparked such a diplomatic storm that he was later forced to retract it, but one which will surely heighten the tension in Naples this morning when he meets Mr Prodi to discuss the next stage of European integration.

In the past few days, some of Mr Prodi's own political supporters have been belittling his initiative as "clumsy", "amateur", and "haphazard". The right wing of his Olive Tree coalition has balked at his high tax proposals and at his refusal, prompted by the far-left on whose votes he depends in parliament, to cut into pensions and health care charges.

Meanwhile Massimo D'Alema, the leader of the left-wing PDS and Mr Prodi's most important political sponsor, has publicly criticised the budget's high housing-tax provisions, and urged them to be revised.

US worries over effect on dollar as euro gathers reality

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

The past week has brought the clearest possible signal that the single European currency will be born in 1999: the Americans are finally becoming interested in it.

From cocktail party chat at the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) taking place this week to the formal meeting of the Group of Seven finance ministers last weekend, Emu has been a sur-

prisingly common subject of conversation in Washington.

Kenneth Clarke, Britain's Chancellor, reported: "This has become a live issue." He added: "The Americans have reached the conclusion that Emu is likely to go ahead. They therefore wish to contemplate what preparations they must make."

Robert Rubin, the United States Treasury Secretary, told journalists that the administration was concerned about the mix of fiscal and monetary policy in Europe. With most Eu-

ropean governments tightening their belts in order to get budget deficits below the Maastricht ceiling next year, the US thinks the level of interest rates on the Continent should be lower to compensate. "It is very important to the US that Europe grows," Mr Rubin said.

One US official described as "loopy" the German insistence that cutting budget deficits would actually increase output thanks to lower long-term interest rates set by the financial markets.

The US worry got short shrift

from the Germans, however. By the end of the G7 meeting Mr Rubin was stressing the need for "credible programs to reduce fiscal deficits". Ministers also highlighted the need for continued structural reform - in other words, deregulation of labour and industry.

But the short-term outlook has not been the only preoccupation of the round of meetings. The US has also started to turn its mind to the broader implications of Europe's move to a single currency.

The thought uppermost in the mind of US administration officials was voiced by Wim Duisenberg, governor of the Dutch central bank, attending the IMF annual meeting. "There will be three players on the field of virtually equal strength," he said. This should not have come as a huge surprise to anybody. After all, the size of the market encompassed by a single currency has always been presented as one of the key economic benefits.

The Americans are beginning to fret about what it will mean for the chronically weak dollar when the Euro comes into existence, especially if the Euro behaves a lot like the German mark. The dollar's role as a world reserve currency could diminish further.

Another implication much discussed by officials in Washington was that the creation of the European Central Bank would be matched faster than anybody has been anticipating by a single European view on fiscal policy. Many now expect that fi-

nance ministers in the Euro area will have to form a collective view, leading to a very rapid integration of fiscal policy.

For small countries such as the Netherlands, this is an attractive avenue to greater influence on the world economic stage. For Italy and Britain, numbers five and six in the G7, it points to the shrinkage of their influence in the longer term. It also indicates the scale of the potential cost to the United Kingdom of staying out, and to Italy of failing to qualify.

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السؤال الأول

Union leaves Germans divided

IMRE KARACS
Bonn

The two nations of Germany commemorated their union yesterday in sombre mood. Six years after the German Democratic Republic was subsumed into the Federal Republic, east and west are united only by a sense of gloom, amid a growing realisation that parity is still more than a decade away.

The fading dream of forging one people has been replaced by bitterness on both sides. The West Germans – seen in the "Zone" as arrogant and intolerant products of the "elbow society" – resent the high price-tag attached to the project. Some 750bn marks (£320bn) have been sunk into eastern Germany so far, but the investment has produced little dividend.

As for the human dimension, the two peoples have less to do with one another than Bosnia's disparate ethnic groups. A recent survey has revealed that a West Berliner is five times more likely to marry a foreigner than someone from the other side of the invisible Wall. Nearly four-fifths of eastern Germans regard themselves as second-class citizens in their new country.

Perceptions about the amount of cash the Ossies deserve and the gratitude they are expected to display in return lie at the heart of the enmity between the two communities. Western taxpayers are painfully aware of the 7.5 per cent lopped off their earnings every month to pay for a perceived eastern profligacy. The burden of reconstruction has already brought the economy in the west to a standstill.

The sense of pessimism has, however, masked the progress. Six years ago the GDR was a country with full employment but empty shops and no prospects. Now the service sector is better than its western equivalent, and productivity in eastern factories often outstrips that of the parent company on the other side.

What eastern Germany has been experiencing might well have been described as "an economic miracle". That it is not, owes a great deal to possibly the only view Ossies and Westies have in common: that East Germans are a nation of losers.

Middle East: Threat of renewed Palestinian violence as leaders return home

Israel the summit victor

PATRICK COCKBURN
Jerusalem

For once Israelis and Palestinians are agreed. Israel believes that from its point of view the Washington summit was a success and Palestinians say that for them it was not. "We got nothing," said Ghassan Khatib, a Palestinian commentator. "The summit was a complete failure."

In two days of talks with President Bill Clinton and Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister gave no date for the partial withdrawal of Israeli troops from Hebron and refused to close the tunnel under the old city of Jerusalem which sparked off the fighting in which 15 Israelis and 59 Palestinians died.

From next Sunday there are to be continuous negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians over redeployment in Hebron and security issues. President Clinton is to lead the services of his Middle-East coordinator, Dennis Ross, for the talks at the Erez checkpoint near Gaza.

The Palestinians seem perilously close to renegotiating the agreement on Hebron, signed a year ago, which is exactly what they did not want to do. The only small gain for the Palestinians is a general target date for redeployment in Hebron which was reportedly given by Mr Netanyahu to Mr Clinton.

Mr Khatib believes Mr Arafat would have been in a stronger position if he had refused to go the summit "unless he received concrete assurances that he would get something". He would not have been alone in refusing to go because President Mubarak, the Americans' principal Arab ally in the Middle East, had turned down an invitation to Washington because Israel was offering nothing.

There was little visible reaction to the summit on the West Bank or in Gaza. The Israeli army has sealed off all towns and villages from each other.

At Halhoul, near Hebron, which has been placed under curfew, a 14-year-old boy was shot dead and two other teenagers were wounded by Israeli soldiers when they threw stones at a military vehicle. Although the Palestinians



A Palestinian scuffles with an Israeli soldier trying to arrest his son after clashes in Hebron yesterday. Photograph: AP

got nothing in Washington, their overall position is stronger than before the demonstrations and killings last week. They are more united, the credibility of the Palestinian Authority has increased and they have won international support. But critics of Mr Arafat say Palestinians are getting fed up with him attending international summits which do them no good. Khalid Amr, a

journalist in Hebron, said: "We are sick of these futile symbols." The summit showed that President Clinton is prepared to protect Mr Arafat personally, but not to pressure Israel into making concessions. A month ago the White House had reportedly told Mr Netanyahu that he would not meet the President unless he first met Mr Arafat. Professor Israel Shahak, a radical critic of Mr Arafat,

said: "Arafat is becoming like many Third World leaders, an instrument through which the international community maintains stability."

There is little likelihood, at least in the immediate future, that Mr Arafat will face serious criticism from the 2.3 million Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza, whatever the views of the intelligentsia. Even in the streets of Hebron, people said they had expected nothing from Washington and they had wanted Mr Arafat to go there to present their case. The Palestinian media, which are all officially controlled or influenced, lauded Mr Arafat's achievement at the summit.

Any fighting in the immediate future is most likely to be between the Israeli army and the 40,000-strong Palestinian police, many of whom, in fact, are combat troops. Palestinians fear that the army may be looking for an excuse to seek revenge for

its losses last week, particularly in the fighting around Joseph's Tomb in Nablus. Mr Arafat has stopped demonstrations at Israeli checkpoints, although some members of Fatah, his own organisation, Fatah, disagree with this.

The Palestinians' disappointment with the summit was mirrored across the Arab world. In Egypt, Amr Moussa, the Foreign Minister, said: "It is clear that the Israelis did not come to Washington to make progress. The proposals submitted by the Israeli delegation constitute a total retreat from the framework of peace."

Yigal Amir, his brother Hagai and Dror Adani, a friend in the army, were sentenced to additional jail terms in Tel Aviv for their plots to kill Yitzhak Rabin, the prime minister whom they finally assassinated at the end of last year. The judge, Amnon Straschnov, described them as the "sons of evil".

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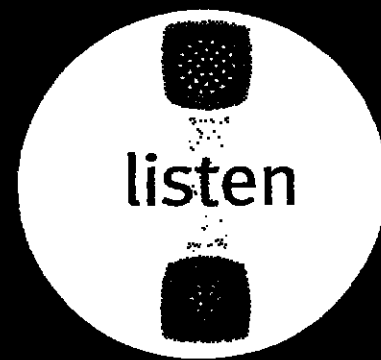
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PHIL REEVES
Moscow

The Kremlin yesterday acted swiftly to counteract rumblings from Alexander Lebed, Russia's security chief, that he may quit after less than four months in high office - a move which would free him to work exclusively on his campaign to succeed Boris Yeltsin.

At the same time, Mr Yeltsin pointedly endorsed the former general's peace deal in Chechnya, singling it out for praise during a radio address to the nation made in an effort to prove to his carping army of critics that he is still in charge in Russia.

Mr Lebed, the Russian government's peace envoy to the war zone and the architect of the Chechen accord, had "fulfilled my instructions", said the president, who is in hospital awaiting a multiple coronary bypass operation later this year.

Such remarks signal a change of tack for Mr Yeltsin who has been increasingly frosty towards Mr Lebed since whisking him into the heart of the Kremlin in the hope of winning his 11m voters in the presidential elections in July. Mr Lebed's overt campaigning, and outspoken remarks - including a demand for the Interior Minister, Anatoly Kulikov, to be fired - have only served to increase the tension.

But, despite his praise, Mr. Yeltsin's slow but clear six-minute address was also an attempt to reassert his authority after a fortnight in which Mr. Lebed repeatedly challenged it. Yesterday, after the two men met for the first time in more than two months, the Kremlin issued a statement saying that Mr. Lebed has threatened to quit, apparently because he was angered over an appointment to a committee handling

senior military posts, but Mr Yehsie urged him to stay on. Whether this was accurate was unclear.

On Wednesday, Mr Lebed hinted at his departure during a speech to the Russian lower house of parliament, or State Duma, during which he was heckled by shouts of "traitor" from MPs. Unlike most of their electorate, they see the deal as a sell-out to the rebels which will lead to the republic's secession. More than 90 parliamentarians have signed a letter to the constitutional court, accusing Mr Lebed of exceeding his powers.

Although Mr Lebed told them that his mandate as Chechen peace envoy was largely carried out, it is uncertain whether he was seriously contemplating resignation (his press office was keen to quash the suggestion). As one of the three most powerful men in the country, he has tangible powers.

wide access to the media, and the ability to raise big money—crucial tools in his battle to become president, which he would be loathe to forfeit.

Yet staying within the Yeltsin administration for too long could also damage his prospects. The Chechen deal is still highly precarious, although the separatists' leader, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, and the Russian prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, pushed on with the process by signing a "joint declaration of principles" in Moscow yesterday.

Thousands of workers across the nation are staging stoppages, hunger strikes, after going unpaid for months. And the general's other main mission, that of crushing the country's rampant corruption, is going to be extremely hard to fulfil, not least because it has penetrated deep into the upper echelons of power.



Coup memories: Communists in Moscow celebrating the 1993 attempt to overthrow President Yeltsin Photograph: A

Afghanistan's Islamist Taliban rulers denied they had been rounding up members of the ousted government of President Burhanuddin Rabbani in Kabul. Acting Information and Culture Minister Amir Khan Mutaqi said: "We are only interrogating those involved in looting in the Taliban's name." He said fewer than 70 people had been detained. Amnesty International accused the Taliban on Wednesday of seizing up to 1,000 prisoners in the capital. *Reuter - Kabul*

Outraged Muslim leaders demanded apologies from authorities for a "barbarian" raid by riot police on Moscow's main mosque in which worshippers allegedly were beaten and jailed. The raid occurred on Tuesday evening amid growing Russian nervousness over Muslim fundamentalism, sparked in part by the war in Chechnya and events in Afghanistan. Police said they were searching for weapons and criminals. AP — Moscow

A new force of 5,000 US troops will shortly leave Germany to cover the withdrawal of the 15,000 US troops in northern Bosnia when the peace implementation force mandate expires on 20 December, the Pentagon has announced. The new force will remain in Bosnia for six months as the fuzzy-based US component of the present 52,000-strong force withdraws. **Christopher Bellamy**

Thousands of ballots cast in Armenia's disputed presidential vote were never counted, calling into question President Levon Ter-Petrosian's re-election victory, international observers said. A preliminary report issued two days after the 22 September election by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe said the irregularities were not a "systematic attempt to deny the will of the people." *AP — Yerevan*

Security police have charged a retired Russian navy captain with treason, alleging he passed state secrets about nuclear submarines to a Norwegian environmental organisation. A Federal Security Service spokesman said Alexander Nikitin was charged with treason, revealing state secrets and forgery. *Reuter - St Petersburg.*

Democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi has urged the European Commission to adopt sanctions against Burma for abusing forced and child labour in the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, said in Brussels. Mr Suu Kyi made the call in a filmed interview smuggled out of Burma and shown at EC hearings on Monday. The hearings could lead to Burma being denied access to the European Generalised System of Preferences. *Reuters - Bangkok*

The first Albanian-German military exercise, involving 600 soldiers, got under way in northern Albania. Albanian Defence Minister Safet Zhulali said Albania was aiming for "modernisation of the army, in order to reach Nato standards, and our goal is to become Nato members." The exercise in Fushekung, north of Tirana, is part of the alliance's Partnership for Peace programme. **AP - Fushekung**

Liechtenstein reported its first case of a cat suffering from the feline equivalent of mad cow disease. The nine-year-old male cat was put to sleep after being diagnosed with Feline Spongiform Encephalopathy (FSE). *Reuters - Vaduz*

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international

Doonesbury wades in to cannabis row

DAVID USBORNE
New York

Tut, Zonker. It appears you may have gone too far in your criticism of California's Attorney General, Dan Lungren, and what he did to that marijuana club in San Francisco. Have you heard? He is trying to have you rubbed out.

It is true. Once more, real-life Republicans, this time Mr Lungren, are tangling with characters from fiction. In 1992, it was sitcom character Murphy Brown, lambasted by Dan Quayle for wilfully producing a child out of wedlock. Now it is Zonker Harris, the hippie in the Doonesbury cartoon strip.

In a week-long series of strips that started this Tuesday, Zonker and his pal Cornell are pondering a ballot initiative that is to be voted on by Californians on election day next

month. It demands that marijuana use be legalised for people with medical conditions such as Aids and cancer.

The initiative, which has widespread support in the state, is a pet hate of Mr Lungren, a long-time opponent of drug-use liberalisation. On 4 August, he made his point by raiding the Cannabis Buyers' Club in San Francisco and closing it down. Hidden behind an anonymous office front, the club had been supplying marijuana to about 12,000 people claiming serious illnesses.

While in violation of the law, the club had long been tolerated by San Francisco's liberal leadership and even by the city police. A recent visit by this correspondent coincided with a march by club members in support of the ballot initiative, at which police officers acted as cheerful escorts.

"I can't believe anyone would

shut down the Cannabis Buyers' Club," Zonker lamented on Tuesday. "Who ordered the bust?" Cornell: "Dan Lungren, the State Attorney General. The local cops wouldn't do it, so they had to bring in Republicans." Zonker subsequently asks: "What country are we living in - Germany? Russia? Idaho?"

An unamused Mr Lungren held a news conference condemning the Doonesbury strip and its author, Garry Trudeau. He also asked both the distributor, the United Press Syndicate, and newspapers in California to drop the cartoon until the subject changes, or at least to run parallel disclaimers. So far, neither the newspapers nor the syndicate have paid any attention.

"No one should be laughing," Mr Lungren spat. "Make no mistake about it. These strips contribute to the national wink-

and-nod attitude toward drug use." Mr Lungren's objections echo the Bob Dole presidential campaign, which in recent days has relentlessly accused President Bill Clinton of cutting back on anti-drug efforts. In response, Mr Clinton yesterday signed a new law to combat the rapid rise in the US of methamphetamine abuse.

But like Mr Quayle with Ms Brown, Mr Lungren is taking a risk by targeting a highly popular cultural icon. The long-running Doonesbury is taken by 1,400 newspapers in the US and worldwide.

Among those disgusted is San Francisco's Democrat Mayor, Willie Brown, who compared the Attorney General's actions to those of the Nazi Gestapo. Dennis Peron, the still defiant founder of the Buyers' Club, suggested that Mr Lungren was behaving like a cry-baby. His final word: "Waaa!"



Prison protest: Relatives of Eta separatist prisoners protesting outside the parliament building in Vitoria, northern Spain. They want the prisoners moved to jails in the Basque region. Photograph: David Aguilar/AP

Bosnia and Serbia bury the hatchet

TONY BARBER
Europe Editor

The presidents of Serbia and Bosnia agreed yesterday to establish diplomatic relations between their two countries, dealing a severe blow to Bosnian Serb hopes of splitting Bosnia and uniting the Serb-controlled zone with Serbia. Presidents Slobodan Milosevic and Alija Izetbegovic reached the agreement in Paris at talks hosted by President Jacques Chirac of France.

The breakthrough was announced two days after the United Nations lifted sanctions imposed on Serbia in 1992 in retaliation for Mr Milosevic's role in fomenting rebellions by Serb minorities in Croatia and Bosnia.

"The time of confrontation and conflicts should be replaced with a time of construction and prosperity," Mr Milosevic and Mr Izetbegovic said in a joint statement.

The Serbian-Bosnian agreement mirrors an accord signed by Serbia and Croatia last August. Crucially, it states explicitly that rump Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) acknowledges Bosnia's independence and territorial integrity. In effect, more than five years after the fighting in former Yugoslavia broke out, Mr Milosevic has renounced the very goals that launched him on the path of war. These were to unite all the Serb populations of former Yugoslavia into one state, and even to annex parts of Croatia and Bosnia to create a Greater Serbian state.

As things have turned out, Mr Milosevic's achievement boils down to the almost total de-

struction at Croat hands of historic Serb communities in Croatia, and the creation of a Bosnian Serb Republic in Bosnia that is a pariah in the world and hostile to him personally. Yet he has the consolation of ruling unchallenged in Serbia and being viewed by Western governments as a man whose co-operation was essential to securing peace in the Balkans.

The Serbian-Bosnian accord



Milosevic: Signed peace agreement in Paris

does not necessarily mean that Bosnia's internal problems become easier to solve. The Bosnian Serb leadership campaigned in last month's Bosnian elections on a platform of secession from Bosnia, and candidates supporting this message were victorious in Serb-populated areas. Perhaps the most difficult challenge facing post-war Bosnia is how to return as many refugees as possible home, and thereby end the physical separation of nationalities which occurred in the war and which Bosnian Serbs and Croats seem determined to maintain.

Britain to host peace summit

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

Britain will host the 50-nation international conference to agree arrangements for maintaining peace in Bosnia next year, it was confirmed yesterday.

The conference will be at Lancaster House, London, on 4-5 December, and will follow the pattern of the Peace Implementation Conference in London last December.

High-level representatives, including foreign ministers, from some 50 countries and the three newly elected members of the Bosnian Presidency - Alija Izetbegovic, Kresimir Zubak and Momcilo Krajisnik - will attend the meeting, chaired by Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, and Baroness Chalker, Minister for Overseas Development.

The most urgent item will be to agree the role of the military

follow-on force (Fo-For) which must replace the existing peace Implementation Force (I-For) after 20 December. Nato's North Atlantic Council will then meet on 10 December to confirm military plans.

A follow-on military force will continue to be involved in arms control, which will be discussed at the conference. However, it is also expected to concentrate far more on supporting civilian reconstruction. The conference will try to get Bosnia's leaders to reaffirm their commitment to the Dayton peace accords.

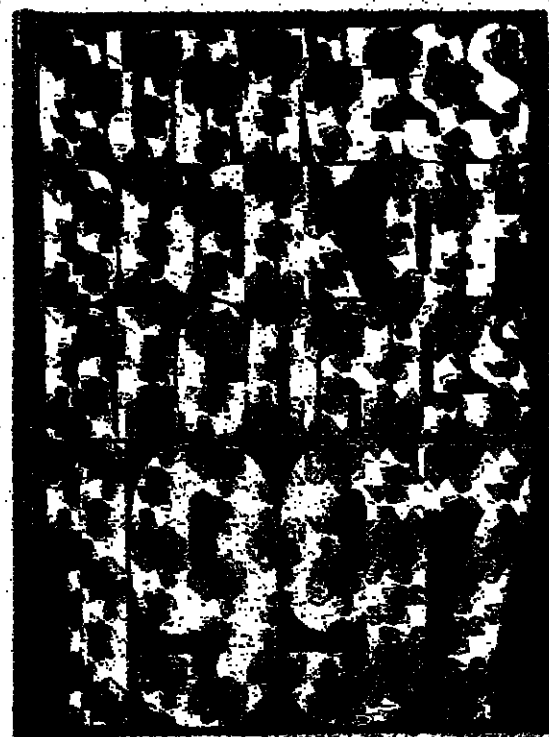
It will also discuss the contentious issue of war criminals - there has been increasing criticism of the Nato governments for not ordering I-For to be more active on the matter. The conference will pressure Bosnian leaders to surrender war criminals hiding in their territory.

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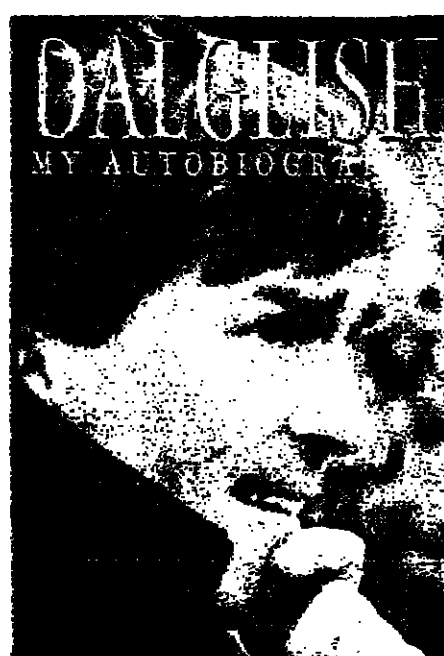
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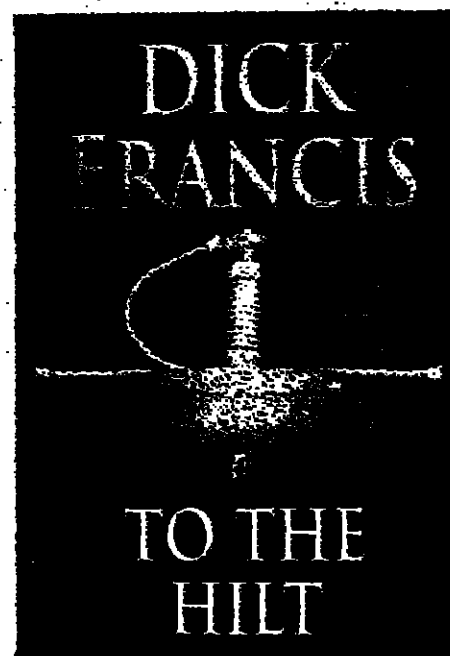
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Betty's favourite Frenchman, Page 28

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Great Leader's aura fails to illuminate Korean mystery



In the name of the father: The late Kim Il Sung and original Great Leader (left) and his son Kim Jong Il; the latter has not assumed his father's full panoply of titles and power

Sonbong, North Korea — "When you finally meet someone whom you've been brought up all your life to love and trust beyond all others," said Han Song Chun, "it's a proud and very moving moment. It was in 1994. I only shook hands with him and said hello, but he exceeded all my expectations. He was much more full of abundant love and charity, much more learned and brilliant, his voice was gentler and more melodious. In short, he was the Great Leader, Kim Jong Il."

If the man described by Mr Han, my guide in North Korea, sounds more like a living saint than one of the most feared rulers on earth, then this is no coincidence — the myths surrounding Kim Jong Il, and his late father, the original Great Leader, Kim Il Sung, always had more in common with religious fundamentalism than the conventional Marxist personality cults of China or the Soviet Union. Stalin and Mao were Uncle and Father to their people, but to men like Mr Han, the rulers of North Korea — the late Kim Il Sung, the 54-year-old Kim Jong Il, and the Workers' Party which they have successively led — are more like Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Just before the birth of the junior Kim, according to his official biography, a swallow descended from heaven to announce the coming of "a prodigious general, who will rule over all the world". Above his birthplace, a simple hut on the holy

Economic distress is creating pressure for change, writes Richard Lloyd Parry

mountain of Paekdon, a double rainbow and a "Guiding Star" appeared. Just as an earlier Saviour, 2,000 years before, argued precociously with the elders in the temple, so little Kim Jong Il was, by his early teens, a leading exponent of North Korea's home grown doctrine of Juche, or "self-reliance".

Instead of crosses, party officials like Mr Han wear miniature badges bearing the face of Kim Il Sung whose renderings in the official iconography unconsciously borrow religious imagery. In one poster in Sonbong, the late leader stands erect in front of a cone-shaped peak. The mountain's snowy flanks, protruding from behind his shoulders, look like nothing so much as a pair of angel's wings.

But, like many religions, there is a mystery at the heart of North Korea's leadership. There are nagging doubts about the degree of power wielded by Kim the Son. Since his father's sudden death in 1994, he has made few appearances. His public utterances amount to a single sentence delivered at a military rally years ago. Most tellingly, in the two years since his father's demise, he has still not taken on the paramount title of state president and general secretary of the Workers' Party.

The question of leadership is exceptionally important for a regime which remains one of the most unpredictable in the world. North Korea combines a Cold War army (around 1 million troops massed on the border with its arch-enemy, South Korea) with a Third World economy in which industry and agriculture are declining so fast that it is barely able to feed its 22 million people. Last month, Mr Han and his comrades were welcoming foreign businessmen to a conference designed to attract desperately needed investment to a free trade zone. Forty-eight hours later, a crew of commandos from a North Korean submarine were shooting it out with their South Korean counterparts after being washed up in an abortive spy mission.

Hard information is so scarce that two opposite interpretations of the state of the North Korean leadership have arisen. The optimistic view finds good reasons for Kim Jong Il's reluctance to assume the full mantle of power. Confucian ethics and filial piety, it is pointed out, makes a hasty transfer of power unseemly. Kim is fully confirmed as leader of the armed forces, a position from which he can judge the best moment to claim his birthright. And in several areas North Korea has acted with a shrewdness indicating a

strong guiding hand — particularly the free-trade zone, and the 1994 deal with US under which Pyongyang agreed to give up a suspected nuclear weapons programme in return for fuel oil and nuclear reactors.

The opposing view sees North Korean policy as no more than a desperate reaction to events which has served only to delay, rather than head off the inevitable reckoning. Initiatives such as the free-trade zone, and the admission of international aid workers to cope with the food crisis, are too little, too late and the submarine fiasco only underlines the lack of co-ordinated leadership, offering a welcome to the outside world with one hand and, with the other, stabbing it in the back.

"At best, I see Kim Jong Il as an arbiter between different factions in the party and the military," says Aidan Foster-Carter, of Leeds University's Korea Project. "At worst, he is just a figurehead." If some of them are in the army, then the consequences for North Korea and for the security of East Asia, could be grave. "I believe that some kind of collapse must come, simply in the sense that the regime can't go on indefinitely as it is," says Mr Foster-Carter. "At some point economic distress must translate into political change, either in the form of grass roots rebellion, or from the centre." In religious terms, the question is whether North Korea must first suffer a painful death, in order to rise again.

Seoul fears new wave of terror

RICHARD LLOYD PARRY

In other circumstances, you might have taken them as no more than random acts of urban violence.

Late on Tuesday night, in two of the most lawless cities in East Asia, a pair of expatriates were savagely attacked. The first incident occurred in Vladivostok, the crime-racked port of the Russian Far East, where a 54-year-old man was found bludgeoned to death on the stairs of his apartment block.

The second took place in Phnom Penh, equally notorious capital of Cambodia, where a 46-year-old hotel executive lies in a coma after being shot in his car by an unidentified motorcyclist. The crimes were separated by 2,000 miles, but several things conspire to cast them in a sinister light.

For a start, neither man appears to have been robbed, although the wallet of the Vladivostok victim, a diplomat, contained the cash equivalent of \$1,000. Most suspicious of all, the attacks were both carried out on South Koreans, at a time when tension has escalated between North and South Korea. The suspicion is that the attacks

may be the latest shots in a dangerous confrontation between the Cold War rivals.

The latest troubles began a fortnight ago with the discovery of a washed-up North Korean submarine on the coast of South Korea. It had apparently come to grief while engaged on a spying mission, and 23 of its crew have so far been killed or captured. Pyongyang claimed, implausibly, that the sub had simply drifted off course. Seoul insists equally unconvincingly that the craft was the precursor of a full-scale invasion.

With the discreet mediation of the United States, the North had over the last two years been making faltering steps towards better relations with the outside world. Last year, South Korea grudgingly provided food aid after serious shortages; three weeks ago, the Stalinist North hosted an unprecedented investment forum in an effort to promote a free-trade zone. This week, however, the South Korean president, Kim Young Sam, announced that further aid and negotiation were out of the question, and put the forces on high alert.

At a meeting with the American-led United Nations Com-

mand in the demilitarised zone, the North Koreans threatened "serious consequences" for the deaths of their submarine crew.

Thus, the suspicion about the two recent attacks. The murder of the diplomat in Vladivostok, Choi Duk Kun, is particularly ominous. Police said publicly that political assassination was unlikely, but privately, they point to intriguing circumstantial evidence: three men of Asian appearance were seen running away; Vladivostok is only 100 miles from the North Korean border, and one of Mr Choi's responsibilities at the consulate was to monitor North Korean affairs.

Even if there was no connection, the peninsula is in for a tense and dangerous few months in which the slightest irritation by either side may provoke a dramatic response. Since the end of the Korean War in 1953, a Northern army of more than 1 million has been facing South Korea and US forces across the demilitarised zone. With inferior equipment, and shortages of food and fuel, a full-scale attack would appear suicidal. But, according to a Japanese diplomat in Tokyo: "The danger is that either side will push the other just too far."

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obituaries / gazette

Andrei Lukanov

Andrei Lukanov, assassinated in Sofia on Wednesday, was a representative member of the lost generation of Communist leaders who attempted to free their countries from totalitarianism whilst retaining the basic structures of socialism.

Lukanov's public life went through three phases. The first was that of rising Communist official. He had a good start. His father had been a Communist exile in Moscow, where Lukanov was born in 1938. He was educated in the Soviet Union, graduating from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations. In 1963 he entered the Bulgarian foreign service. His career was to culminate in his appointment as permanent Bulgarian delegate to Comecon.

Whilst making his way up the diplomatic ladder, Lukanov had carefully nurtured his party career. He became a member of the Bulgarian Communist Party in 1963 and by 1979 was a candidate member of the politburo. For a man of Lukanov's ability, experience, and connections, promotion to full membership appeared to be only a matter of time. It was not.

That Lukanov did not reach the very highest echelon of power was because the gerontocratic party chief, Todor Lukanov, with his close relationship with the Gorbachevs in Moscow, was the natural champion for Bulgaria's small but impatient reformist clan. It was no

surprise that Lukanov headed the central committee faction which finally persuaded Zhivkov to step down on 10 November 1989.

The second phase of Lukanov's life began with Zhivkov's fall. Lukanov was elected a full member of the politburo: he stepped on to the bridge just as the ship began to take water. But he was no rat; he did not desert; instead he put his hands to the pumps. He was a natural choice for the round table meetings between government and opposition which charted the way towards the first post-Communist elections in June 1990. The Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP), as the Communists had become, emerged as the largest party and it fell to Lukanov to form an administration.

It did not last long. Lukanov failed to persuade the other parties to join him in a coalition government to administer the unpleasant medicine necessary to cure the nation's manifold economic ills, and there were deep suspicions that the elections which had brought him to power were fraudulent. As the economic situation deteriorated even further, opposition mounted until it drove Lukanov from office in November.

In the final stage of his life Lukanov continued his political campaign for reform and reactivated his old connections in the foreign trading sector. In the political world his vociferous support for thorough and rapid

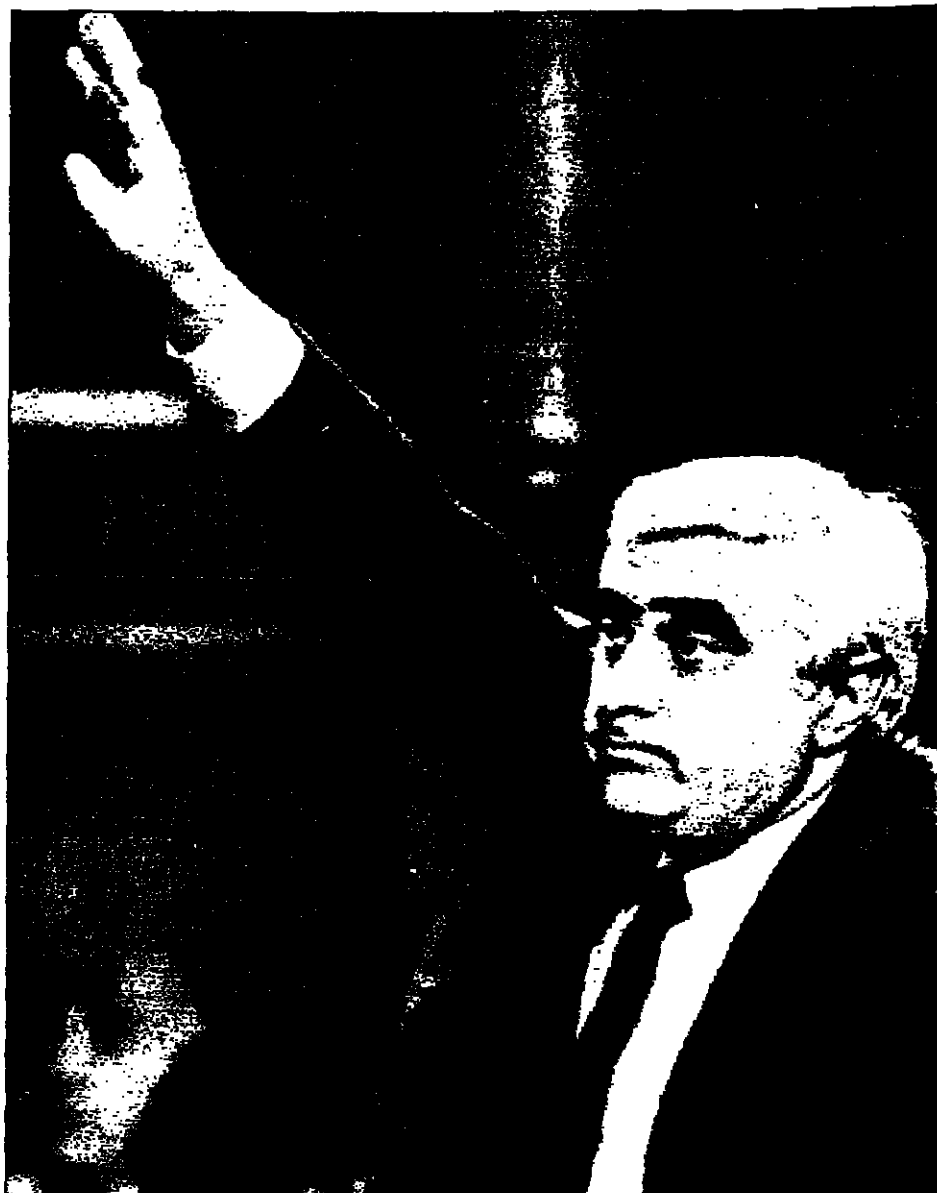
reform made him sharply critical of the BSP government which came into office in January 1995.

His commercial life at first seemed even less successful than his political campaigns. In 1992 he spent some months in prison for alleged financial misdemeanours, and further accusations were to follow. They did not, however, prevent Lukanov from becoming a prominent example of what Bulgarians had come to call "red businessmen". His previous experience in foreign trade and his close association with Russia were important factors in his appointment in May 1995 as chairman of the Bulgarian-Russian gas company Topenergy, which was to construct a gas pipeline from the Bulgarian port of Burgas to carry energy to Turkey, Greece and Macedonia. In July 1996, for reasons which have never been made clear, Lukanov was removed from this post.

During both his political and financial careers Lukanov had made many enemies, but he had also made friends. A most accomplished linguist and a man of considerable culture, he was clubbable as well as capable.

Richard Crampton

Anatoly Karlov Lukanov, politician, born Moscow 26 September 1938; Minister of Foreign Economic Relations, Bulgaria 1987-90; Prime Minister 1990; married (one son, one daughter); died Sofia 2 October 1996.



Clubbable and capable: Lukanov made many enemies, but he also made friends

Joonas Kokkonen

In 1979, Joonas Kokkonen's only opera, *The Last Temptations*, then just four years off its composer's desk, was taken by the Finnish National Opera on a tour of seven foreign houses, the most prestigious of them the Met in New York. In London, the visitors had to make do with the cramped conditions of Sadler's Wells Theatre.



Kokkonen: a humanist

The unglamorous libretto, dealing with the obsessive religiosity of a backwoods evangelist who neglects his family for his intemperate faith, is clad in music that expresses deep human sympathy, hinting through the course of the opera at a hymn that finally emerges in an uplifting, ineffably joyous major-key chorus. At the curtain the capacity Sadler's Wells audience leapt to its feet and gave the work a tumultuous reception, with an enthusiasm such as I have never experienced for any other work, new or old, opera or anything else. To date, *The Last Temptations* has had well over 200 performances – an achievement probably unrivalled in recent times. Its success confirmed Kokko-

nen's position as the most important figure in Finnish musical life after Sibelius and launched single-handedly the current revival of Finnish opera. Kokkonen was also a pianist, a writer, a music administrator and a teacher. And for 40 years he composed, slowly and steadily, eventually producing a catalogue of some 50 works that contains music of unambiguously high quality.

Born in central Finland in 1921, Kokkonen studied musi-

cology and piano, with Selim Palmgren, at Helsinki University and, military service interrupting his time as a student, graduated in 1949, a year after completing the Piano Trio that marked the beginning of his career as a composer. He had also taken classes in instrumentation with the gifted Leo Funtek and spent some time abroad with Hannes Jelneke in Vienna. "But especially," he later reminisced, "I studied with Bach. Bach is the greatest teacher."

Kokkonen supplemented his income as a pianist and chamber musician with work as a critic and broadcaster. Though his music may have come to him hesitantly, he was a fluent producer of words, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s: the closely set catalogue of writings at the end of an anthology assembled by Kalevi Aho in 1992 comes to over 400 pages.

As a teacher, Kokkonen was a magnet for composition students from all across the Nordic countries, many of them going on to become the most prominent composers of the following generation: Sallinen, Paavo

Heininen and Pehr Henrik Nordgren in Finland, Ragnar Söderlund in Norway, and countless others. For a decade, beginning in 1949, Kokkonen lectured at the Sibelius Academy, until he was made professor of composition there. In 1963, he was elected a member of the Finnish Academy, the most prestigious honour in Finnish intellectual life. Two years after that, he became the president of the Society of Finnish Composers, one of many positions in which he worked tirelessly to improve musical life in Finland.

Whatever his local standing, the music makes Kokkonen a figure of international significance. Besides *The Last Temptations*, his crowning glory, there are several choral works, including a Requiem, four symphonies and a handful of other orchestral pieces, three string quartets, a piano quintet and that trio, piano pieces (mostly early) and a scattering of songs.

Like Beethoven's, his output falls into three approximate phases, each development marked by a string quartet,

though across these divisions his style, which has something of Sibelius refracted through Bartók, remains unmistakably his own: luminous, melodious, calmly powerful. His earliest compositions led to a period of experimentation with dodecaphony, passing through a more explicit preoccupation with logical, symphonic growth, to the diatonic world of his last few works, not designated as in specified keys but adhering unambiguously to tonal centres.

Indeed, even in his 12-tone pieces, Kokkonen uses triadic harmonies, giving off a deep, warm glow in all his scores. His *First Symphony*, for example, despite its use of 12-tone tones as the cornerstones of its construction, is saturated with triadic harmony: he was too much of a humanist to write music that didn't appeal to the heart as much as to the brain. And the best of it – honest, sincere music of a type many composers seem reluctant to write these days – affects the heart very directly.

Kokkonen told me in 1991, "I am a composer who gets everything ready in his head. No sketches, no short score. I write everything directly out in full score." But he never found composing especially easy (*The Last Temptations*, for example, took him 16 years) and he seems never really to have recovered from the death in 1979 of his second wife, Maija, commemorated in the luminous and deeply felt Requiem finished in 1981.

Martin Anderson

Joonas Kokkonen, composer, born Iisalmi, Finland 13 November 1921; married 1943 Maire Sisko Mäkinen (one son, two daughters; marriage dissolved 1953); 1954 Maija Heljo (died 1979; two daughters); 1980 Anita Pakama; died Järvenpää, Finland 2 October 1996.

Gerald Darling

Gerald Darling spent all his professional life in legal circles in London where he practised at the Admiralty Bar, but returned on retirement to his native Omagh, Co Tyrone.

He was born in 1921, in Eranganagh Rectory, where his grandfather Gerald Moriarty was Rector, and his commitment to Northern Ireland was a strong theme throughout his life. Academically he was a high flier. His first school was at Omagh. A scholarship to Harrow followed where, with a Gold Medal for a Greek essay, he took a Classics scholarship to Hertford College, Oxford. Yet, when he won a prize to visit Greece, war prevented him from taking it up and ironically, despite his lifelong love of the Classics, he never set foot in the wine-dark sea of Homer.

At the age of 18 he began an outstanding career in the RNRV, from 1940 to 1946, as a Fleet Air Arm pilot, later becoming Chief Pilot with the Mediterranean Fleet. A dangerous job and few of his colleagues survived the war. He himself crash-landed, suffering severe injuries including a smashed pelvis. The prognosis was that he would never walk again but following the Greek motto on his aircraft, meaning "Know Thyself", he characteristically defied all the odds, learning to ride again both horse and bicycle. He maintained his connection with the Navy through the RNRV, rising to the rank of Lieutenant-Commander.

When the war ended he returned to Oxford to complete his degree before being called to the Bar, by the Middle Temple. He specialised in Admiralty work and became leader of the Admiralty Bar, taking silk in 1967 and being called to the Bench in 1972. He was an international authority on salvage at sea and was awarded the Lloyd's Silver Medal in 1991 (previously awarded to a Russian cosmonaut).

In 1979 he was invited by the Queen Mother to become Admiralty Judge to the Cinque Ports when she became Lord Warden. It was an office he greatly cherished.

On the death of his father in

1958 he had inherited Crevenagh House, near Omagh, where, from his schooldays, he had spent many happy holidays with his extended family. He was proud of his descent from the Auchinleck family who had always lived there, and resolved to maintain it as a family home despite his ties to life in London. (In his London office you would find a Donegal landscape and a map showing the wartime achievements of Ulster.)

In 1990 he became Deputy Lieutenant of Co Tyrone and in 1993 High Sheriff. In his obituary address Bishop Hannan of Clogher paid tribute to Gerald Darling's contribution to the work of Edencerry parish, where he had served as parish secretary. In the townlands of Omagh his roots went deep. Bishop Hannan related how, before a major court appearance, Darling would ease the tension by thinking of his favourite spots on the river, the snipe bogs and mountains of Tyrone. Strangely, after a lifetime of trout-fishing, he caught his first salmon only last year. One of his family remembers the fishing picnics in childhood – "as unfortunately a mizzly day is good for fishing the picnics were often rather damp affairs".

But that was balanced by the warmth of bedtime stories in the family flat in the Middle Temple where it is said the family below, willy-nilly, added to the appreciative audience for Darling's dramatic readings of Winnie the Pooh. He would, friends say, have been equally at home as a farmer, taking great pride in his forestry and Belld Galloway cattle and never more at home than working in ragged jeans with his chainsaw.

A permanent record of Gerald Darling's distinction as a lawyer will be his contribution to that definitive work, *Halsbury's Laws of England (Admiralty and Ship Collisions)*, the third edition of 1952. In 1992 he was made an Honorary Bencher of the Northern Ireland Bar.

Roy Bradford



Darling: salvage at sea

Gerald Ralph Auchinleck Darling, barrister-at-law, born Eranganagh, Co Tyrone 8 December 1921; called to the Bar, Middle Temple 1950, Bencher 1972, Treasurer 1991; Barrister, Northern Ireland 1957, Honorary Bencher 1992; QC 1967; member, Panel of Lloyd's Arbitrators in Salvage Cases 1967-78; Appeal Arbitrator 1978-91; member, Panel of Wreck Commissioners 1967-96; QC, Hong Kong 1968; Judge, Admiralty Court of the Cinque Ports 1979-96; trustee, Royal Naval Museum 1985-90; Lloyd's Silver Medal 1991; married 1954 Susan Hobbs (one son, one daughter); died Londonderry 13 September 1996.

Frances Lear was a political activist and Hollywood wife who spent some \$25m she received from a divorce settlement on a magazine she named after herself. Lear provided something of an example for the divorced women of America. "I believe the second half of one's life is meant to be better than the first half," she once commented. "It certainly is true of me."

In 1985 she divorced her third husband, Norman Lear, the successful television producer of television series like *All in the Family* and *Maude*, and received over \$100m in a settlement, one of the largest ever recorded. She claimed, and it was generally agreed, she was the model for Maude, played by Bea Arthur, and that Mr Lear could not have produced the shows without her.

She subsequently sank \$25m into *Lear's*, a magazine aimed for women like herself – "for the woman who wasn't twice vested". Circulation quickly grew until she decided to abandon the older age niche and compete with other women's magazines. By 1994 circulation

had reached half a million copies but *Lear's* failed to attract enough advertising and closed.

She was known as a hot-tempered editor who sought, but reliably ignored, advice, and changed her mind capriciously. A staff member recalled Lear's reaction when she was told she could not change a quote. "It is my magazine," she shouted. "I can do what I want."

Earlier, Lear made a name for herself among feminists, working on Eugene McCarthy's 1968 presidential bid and with the National Organisation for

Women on behalf of equal rights causes. But as her husband's television career took off in the 1970s she felt increasingly stifled, once commenting that a woman in Hollywood is nothing "unless she is under 21, powerful or a star".

She attributed her fiery streak to having lived in Hollywood and freely discussed her manic-depression, alcoholism and the several suicide attempts she had made over the years. "I've always been both tough and fragile," she said in an interview in 1992. "I had to be

tough because the fragility was so at the ready to take over."

Frances Lear was born in Hudson, New York, at a home for wayward girls, the child of an unwed mother and an unknown father, and was adopted at the age of 14 months. In her autobiography, *The Second Seduction* (1992), she related years of sexual abuse at the hands of her stepmother's second husband, at the age of 12.

After school in Massachusetts she moved to New York and worked at various secretarial jobs from which she was con-

sistently fired. She worked briefly at the Copacabana nightclub as a camera girl. That job ended when she asked Frank Costello, the famous gangster, if he would like his picture taken. Costello grabbed her under the arms, carried her out of the club and down the street, kissed her, and advised her to find a new line of work.

She had two short-lived marriages, first to a traffic manager at a naval shipyard in North Carolina and secondly to a man of whom she later claimed she could not remember how to

spell his name, before marrying Norman Lear. After raising two daughters, she realised that "we had become he" and she spent 15 years summoning up the courage to leave the marriage.

Edward Helmore

Frances (Frances) Lear, magazine proprietor, born Hudson, New York 14 July 1923; married first Arnold Weiss (marriage dissolved), secondly Morton Kaufmann (marriage dissolved), 1957; Norman Lear (two daughters; marriage dissolved 1985); died New York 30 September 1996.

Maurice Valency, playwright, died New York 28 September, aged 93. Notable for his adaptations of Giraudoux's *The Madwoman of Châlons* (which starred Audrey Hepburn) and Durrenmat's *The Visit* (featuring Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne). Published a first novel, *Ashby*, when he was 81. Jean Cain, actress, died aged 87. The voice of Britain's first speaking clock. After winning a competition in 1936 to record for "T.M." the telephone recorded time service, she took to the stage professionally. Udon Patpongpanich, died Bangkok 30 September, aged 79. Developer of Patpong Road, Bangkok, as a "sin strip".

Births, Marriages & Deaths

BIRTHS

CAPLINS: On 2 October: Aedon (nee Connolly) and John, a son, Max John.

DEATHS

ROSENFELD: Sybil, theatre historian, suddenly, at home, on 2 October. Funeral 12.30pm on Tuesday 8 October at Golders Green Crematorium, West Chapel.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 3DL, telephoned to 0171-293 2011 or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. Please include a daytime telephone number.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, will be in the Royal 1st Cavalry Division, Western Division, The Princess Royal and the Duke of York, will be in the Royal 1st Cavalry Division, Western Division, The Princess Royal and the Duke of York, will be in the Royal 1st Cavalry Division, Western Division.

Changing of the Guard: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment will be in the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 1pm.

Birthdays

Professor Richard Batchelor, immunologist, 65; Lord Blaker, former government minister, 74; Sir Neville Bowman-Shaw, chairman, Boss Trucks Ltd, 66; Miss Jackie Collins, novelist, 50; Sir Terence Couran, chairman, the Couran Shop, 65; Air Chief Marshal Sir Kenneth Cross, 85; Mr Harry Greenway MP, 62; Dr F. Dudley Hart, rheumatologist, 87; Mr Charles Hewson, 72; Sir John Hogg, former deputy chairman, Williams and Glyn's Bank, 84; Mr Frank Keating, sports journalist, 59; Mr John McFall MP, 52; Mr Richard Martin, former vice-chairman, Allied Lyons, 64; Mr Tony Mace, smooch champion, 37; Sir Hector Minto MP, 74; Dr Gareth Owen, former Vice-Chancellor, University of Wales, 73; Mr Gavin Pritchard-Gordon, racehorse trainer, 51; Mr Giles Radley MP, 60; Miss Anneka Rice, television presenter, 38; Mr John Rutherford, rugby footballer, 41; The Right Rev Dr Richard Jay, former Bishop of Rochester, 82; Mr Marcus Seitchell, Surgeon-Gynaecologist to the Queen, 53; Sir Gervase Sheldon, former High Court judge, 83; Sir James Spicer MP, 71; Mrs Ann Thwaites, writer, 64; Miss Ann Widdecombe MP, Minister of State, Home Office, 49.

Anniversaries

Births: Louis X ("The Stubbhorn"), King of France, 1289; Lucas Cranach the Elder (Lucas Muller), painter, 1473; Lucas Cranach the Younger, painter, 1515; Richard Cromwell, Lord Protector, 1626; Gianluigi Frasson, engraver, 1730; Edmond Malme, Shakespearean scholar, 1741; François-Pierre Guillaume Guizot, historian and statesman, 1787; William Griggs, inventor of photo-chromolithography, 1832; Helen Lomax-Sherrington, soprano, 1834; Frederic Remington, painter, illustrator and sculptor, 1861; Alfred Damon Runyon, writer and journalist, 1864; Henry Gaudier-Brzeska, sculptor, 1891; Engelbert Dollfus, statesman, 1892; Buster Keaton (Joseph Francis Keaton), comedian, 1895; Deaths: St Teresa of Avila (Teresa de Cepeda y Alhambra), Carmelite nun, 1582; Francesco Albani or Albano, painter, 1600; Alonzo Cano (El Graecino), painter, architect and sculptor, 1667; Reinhardt Harmenszoon van Rijn, painter, 1669; Henry Carey, poet and musician, committed suicide 1743; Alexander Runciman, painter, 1785; John Rennie, civil engineer, 1821; Max Ludwig Planck, physicist, 1947; Sir Arthur Whitten Brown, pioneer aviator, 1948; Janis Joplin, rock singer, 1970. On this day: Peterborough Cathedral was consecrated, 1238; Miles Coverdale's translation of the Bible was published, 1535; the independence of Belgium was proclaimed, 1830; the Boys Brigade was founded in Glasgow by Sir William Smith, 1883; the first public escalator was opened at Earl's Court underground station, 1911; 600 Mrs Rebecca Ann Lamer Pelton became the first woman in the US Senate, 1922; Hitler and Mussolini met at the Brenner Pass, 1940; the world's first artificial satellite, *Sputnik 1*, was launched by the Soviet Union, 1957; the first transatlantic passenger jet service started operating, 1958; the first close-up pictures of the moon were made from the Soviet *Luna III*, 1959; Pope Paul VI became the first pope to visit America, 1965; Lesotho, formerly Basutoland, became independent, 1966; Today is the Feast Day of St Ammon, St Francis of Assisi and St Petronius of Bologna.

Lectures

Victoria and Albert Museum: Pat Earnshaw, "European Needle Laces", 2.30pm. National Gallery: Norman Coody, "Francisco (G) Sasseti, *Scenes from the Life of Saint Francis*", 1pm. Tate Gallery: Alec Finlay, "Memory Gardens: an introduction to the poetry, art and gardens of Ian Hamilton Finlay", 1pm.

Dinners

Inner Temple: Mr Edward Nugent QC, Treasurer of Inner Temple, and Masters of the Bench of the Inner Temple entertained Mr Michael Sheppard QC, Treasurer of the Middle Temple, and Masters of the Bench of Middle Temple to dinner yesterday evening in Inner Temple.

United Oxford and Cambridge University Club: Sir Percy Cradock, former foreign policy adviser to the Prime Minister and former ambassador to the People's Republic of China, was the principal speaker at a dinner held yesterday evening at the United Oxford and Cambridge University Club, London SW1. His subject was "China".

Synagogue services

Details of synagogue services to be held tomorrow may be obtained by telephoning the following. Sabbath begins in London at 6.17pm. United Synagogue: 0171-367 4300. Federation of Synagogues: 0181-262 2263. Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues: 0171-580 1663. Reform Synagogue of Great Britain: 0181-349 4731. Spanish and Portuguese Jews Congregation: 0171-229 3273. New London Synagogue (Masorti): 0171-328 1036.

'Hideously ugly' tag could be defamatory

LAW REPORT

4 October 1996

Berkoff v Burchill and another; Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Neill, Lord Justice Millett, Lord Justice Phillips) 31 July 1996

To call someone hideously ugly was capable of being defamatory; whether it was so or not must depend on the circumstances of the case.

The Court of Appeal by a majority (Lord Justice Millett dissenting) dismissed an appeal by the defendants, Julie Burchill and Times Newspapers Ltd, against the decision of Sir Maurice Drake, sitting as a High Court judge on 20 September 1995, refusing their application under Order 14A of the Rules of the Supreme Court to dismiss a libel action brought by the plaintiff, Steven Berkoff, on the ground that to call a person "hideously ugly" was incapable of being defamatory.

James Price QC (*Theodore Goddard*) for the defendants; Manuel Barra (*Michele de Reus*) for the plaintiff.

Lord Justice Neill said Mr Berkoff, an actor, director and writer, was well known for his work on stage, screen and television. Miss Burchill, a journalist and writer, wrote about the cinema for the *Sunday Times*. In its issue of 30 January 1994 Miss Burchill, re-

viewing the film *The Age of Innocence*, wrote: "Film directors, from Hitchcock to Berkoff, are notoriously hideous-looking people". In his issue dated 6 November 1994, reviewing the film *Frankenstein*, Miss Burchill described the character of "the Creature" in the film as being "a lot like Steven Berkoff, only marginally better-looking".

Mr Berkoff sued for libel, alleging that the quoted words meant and were understood to mean that he was hideously ugly. The defendants issued a summons under Order 14A, seeking an order determining whether the pleaded meaning was capable of being defamatory; and if not, that the action be dismissed.

The judge held that to call someone hideously ugly, while being no reflection on his character or reputation, and unlikely to expose him to ridicule, might nevertheless lead ordinary reasonable people to shun him, and that it was therefore capable of being defamatory.

Words might be defamatory even though they imputed neither disgraceful conduct on

the part of the plaintiff, nor any lack of skill or efficiency in the conduct of his trade or business or professional activity, if they held him up to contempt, scorn or ridicule, or tended to exclude him from society. But insults which did not diminish a man's standing among others did not found an action for libel or slander. The exact borderline was difficult to define.

Mr Berkoff argued that to be called "hideously ugly" exposed him to ridicule, or would cause him to be shunned or avoided. The defendants argued that the defining characteristic of the tort of defamation was injury to reputation: the fact that a statement might injure feelings or cause annoyance was irrelevant to whether it was defamatory.

The meaning of words in a libel action was determined by the reaction of the ordinary reader and not by the intention of the publisher, but the perceived intention of the publisher might colour the meaning.

In this case it would be open to the jury to conclude that, in

their context, the remarks about Mr Berkoff gave the impression that he was not merely physically unattractive but actually repulsive. To say this of someone in the public eye who made his living, in part at least, as an actor, was capable of lowering his standing in the estimation of the public and of making him an object of ridicule. In the circumstances, it would be wrong to withdraw this case from the jury.

Lord Justice Millett, dissenting, said chaff and banter were not defamatory, and even serious imputations were not actionable if no one would take them seriously.

The line between mockery and defamation might sometimes be difficult to draw, when it was it should be left to the jury to draw it. But his Lordship was not persuaded that the present case could properly be put on the wrong side of the line.

Miss Burchill made a cheap joke at Mr Berkoff's expense; she might thereby have demeaned herself, but his Lordship did not believe she had defamed Mr Berkoff. His claim was as frivolous as Miss Burchill's article and the court's time ought not to be taken up with either of them.

Paul Magrath, Barrister

queen & country

part two: family in crisis

In the second extract from his new biography, Ben Pimlott reviews 1992, the Queen's *annus horribilis*, when each month brought fresh traumas and she sought refuge in letters from a sympathetic public



was arranging to be at home to watch *Panorama*, the subject of the day was not even hinted at. Delighted with its prize, the BBC abandoned any pretence at objectivity, restricting the interview to the gentlest of questions and retaking shots indefatigably to produce a fluent package. "You will never be King," Diana had told Charles, according to one of his friends. "I shall destroy you." On television, she merely indicated that she did not expect her husband to succeed and offered her son as an alternative.

The Queen did not let her daughter-in-law have the last word. After the *Panorama* interview, she consulted the Prime Minister, the Archbishop of Canterbury and senior household staff. Then she made a pre-emptive strike, writing letters to both the Prince and Princess pronouncing, with her husband's support, that an early divorce was desirable. The tone of the letters was more measured than she felt. According to one close source, they came out of a deep exasperation, and of a desire to state her position in incontrovertible prose because, as she had learnt, "bulimics rewrite history in 24 hours".

When the contents of the letter became publicly known, the Princess of Wales at first seemed taken aback. Then her lawyers began negotiating a divorce settlement in earnest.

As for the Queen, she carried on. She led a more solitary existence than in the past. The number of intimate friends among her contemporaries was declining. In September 1993, Bobo MacDonald, her childhood nurse and then royal dresser for 67 years – and her relentless custodian, daily companion, confident and friend – died at the age of 89. With her husband often away, the Queen frequently dined on her own.

If she was lonely, she did not say. But she was not immune to the strains and humiliations suffered by the Royal Family. She took comfort in her mailbag – many times larger than at the start of the reign – of letters written by ordinary people expressing concern. They often affected her more than the polite or embarrassed sympathy of friends. "You see," she would say, turning them over, "they really do understand."

The sting in the fairy-tale

In the early Eighties a new borderline was being crossed in the privacy debate. So long as royal "private" lives were irreproachable, it was possible to defend "privacy" in general from a high moral platform. It was more difficult once that changed.

A leader in the field of freer sexual morals was the Queen's second son, aged 21 at the time of the Waleses' wedding, and increasingly seen as the late 20th-century equivalent of a Regency huck. The popular press was full of Prince Andrew's exploits, adding to the tabloid *frisson*. Unlike his older brother, whose female relationships had tended to be upper class, Andrew's liaisons were more democratic, adding to the tabloid *frisson*. He acquired an inevitable nickname, "Randy Andy's high publicised friendship with actress Koo Stark and Katie Rabbett, and his alleged affair with former model Vickie Hodge deeply upset the Queen," Audrey Whiting, the *Sunday Mirror's* royalty watcher, confided in June 1984. "She has made it clear she will

not tolerate any more 'indiscreet behaviour'."

Actually, the opposite was the case. The Queen made little attempt to curb the activities of her children, especially the younger ones. "She should have told them off more," considers one ex-courtier. "The trouble is that the Queen hates dictating to the family," says another. "I think she's terrified of her children," says a former adviser to the Prince of Wales. "She's afraid they won't do what she tells them."

If she was not a bugging mother, she was also a far cry from a censorious one. She treated Andrew with a special indulgence. "She was happy about his relationship with Koo Stark – a very nice, gentle girl," says a former courtier.

Each month of the 40th anniversary year of the accession seemed to bring a new embarrassment, humiliation, error, or accusation. The year 1992 was an *annus horribilis* indeed: in January came the photographs of Fergie on holiday with a Texas oil millionaire; in February, the image of "Diana alone" at the Taj Mahal;

in March, the separation of the Duke and Duchess of York; in April, the divorce of Princess Anne and Mark Phillips; in May, the departure of Fergie from the marital home, taking her daughters with her...

But it was the problems of the Prince and Princess of Wales which caused most concern. In retrospect – in view of the episodes apart, semi-public quarrels and heart-to-hearts with garrulous friends – the remarkable thing is that the details remained secret for so long. To those who knew the couple well, the gap between the gauchely reflective Prince and the sharp, whimsical, brittle Princess was obvious within a year of their wedding. The Queen and Prince Philip chose not to notice. When Diana turned up late for meals, or left them early without explanation, her behaviour was ignored.

Charles, according to his friends, blamed his parents for not being more supportive. "He felt very let down by his unsympathetic mother and father," says a confidante. "When his marriage went wrong, he felt criticised by them."

Perhaps they were more concerned than they seemed. "The Queen was aware of stresses and strains," says a courtier from the period. "She was wholly sympathetic towards Charles, in fact rather one-eyed in her approach." Once, the Queen and her husband dined *à quatre* with friends whose children also had troublesome marriages, for the specific purpose of "wondering together where they went wrong".

The difficulties of the Prince and Princess had long been the subject of rumour – but little of it was backed by hard fact, and most only half-believed by non-tabloid readers. Then in June 1992 came *Diana: Her True Story*, a book by Andrew Morton clearly produced with the encouragement or connivance of the Princess. It was the logical outcome of the trend towards openness, ending a century and a half of royal reserve on personal matters and replacing it with the opposite: royal exhibitionism.

Readers were intrigued to be told – and the Royal Family was horrified that the world to be informed – that while pregnant with a potential future king, the Princess of Wales had thrown herself down the wooden staircase at Sandringham; that she had slashed her wrists with a razor blade; and that, in an attempt to rescue her from the terrible psychic consequences of becoming one of the most admired women in the world, she had been dispatched to a succession of therapists.

The book rang true, and it was a new kind of book: although its style was that of a romantic novel, it could not be dismissed as scandal-mongering. It was a moral classic about a young woman who had entered the legendary world which millions dream about, and who found that the "model family" was a myth.

There was another aspect to the book. If it presented the Princess as vulnerable and unable to cope, it also painted a hostile portrait of her husband – blaming him both for his lack of understanding and for his continuing relationship with Camilla Parker Bowles. At the same time, Morton presented the Royal Family not as a haven of domestic virtue but as unhelpful and self-absorbed.

The strongest theme of the book was a juxtaposition of warmth and coldness. On the one hand, there was Diana, "tactile, emotional, gently irreverent and spontaneous"; on the other, there were the icy Windsors, with their unfriendly mansions where the Princess found the atmosphere so dispiriting that it was liable to bring on a bulimia attack.

A couple of decades earlier, a seriously negative report about the Queen's family would have been unprintable. The Morton book released all inhibitions. Now a bounty hunt for worse revelations, grimmer details, wider scandals, began in earnest. In August, the *Daily Mirror* published a picture of the Duchess of York – separated, but still married – bare-breasted beside a pool having her toes kissed. The simmering circulation war between the major tabloids became total:

editors ransacked attics for old material which, in the past, had seemed too damaging to use. *The Sun* made public the two-and-a-half-year-old tape recording of a telephone conversation in which the Princess of Wales spoke with great affection to a friend, James Gilbey, who referred to her as "Squidgey" and "Squidge". In it, she described her marriage as "torture". Recounting one difficult family meal at Sandringham, she said: "I was very bad at lunch and I nearly started blubbing... I just felt really sad and empty and thought 'bloody hell, after all I've done for this fucking family'."

The monarchy's domestic problems became part of its evolving image: no longer a model family, but an all too common one – although, as it was also frequently pointed out, three failed marriages out of four children was above the national norm.

There were plenty of shocks and embarrassments to come. In the autumn of 1994 Jonathan Dimbleby's biography of Prince Charles contained an admission from Charles of his adultery with Mrs Parker Bowles and presented Diana as quixotic, self-obsessed and paranoid. But it also revealed the Prince's own view of his childhood and upbringing.

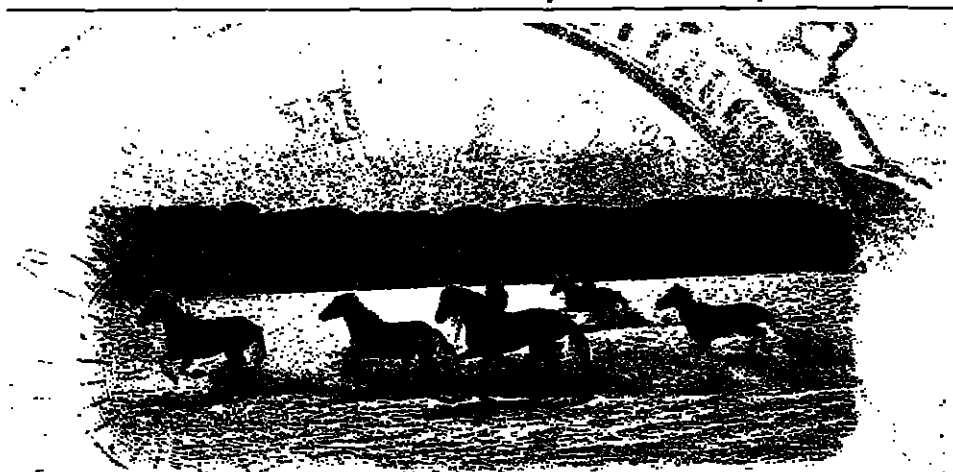
Morton had painted the Queen as an aloof mother; not unkind, but disengaged. Others had commented on the Queen's reported inability to show physical affection, and tendency to put her children after her duty. Dimbleby's references to the Queen and Prince Philip were brief. Since,

however, they were assumed to come from the Prince of Wales, they helped to establish a new legend. The Queen was presented as cold, Philip as a bully. The monarch and her husband, formerly set in the nation's imagination as the ideal mother and father, became indifferent parents, who caused the marriages of their children to break down by starving them of love.

The main impact of the book was to stir, yet again, public interest in the Waleses' marriage, and to raise the question of whether the Prince was fit to succeed. The Coronation chant "May the Queen live forever" became the fervent invocation of some of the monarchy's strongest supporters. The world divided into two camps: those who sided with the Princess of Wales – who included many feminists and constitutional reformers – and supporters of the Prince.

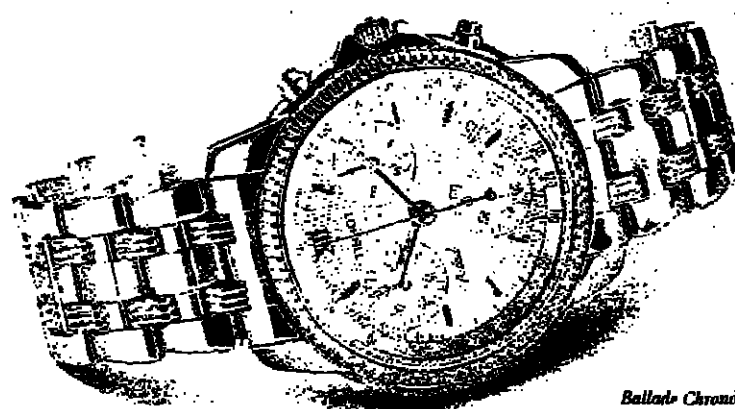
Then Diana returned to the offensive. "There is a studied casualness in her relationship with the Royal Family," a friend of the Queen reflected. "She has a 'What the hell, I'll show them' sort of attitude." In November 1995, stung by Dimbleby's suggestion that she was psychologically unstable and a "problem", she agreed to take part in an hour-long interview on BBC *Panorama*.

After the broadcast had been announced, but before it had taken place, a friend of the Queen and Duke who spent a weekend with them was struck by how little they seemed to be showing the strain. Nothing came up in conversation except the rural pursuits that always interested them, with plenty of jokes. While the whole world



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A reliable litmus test that autumn's here



Miles Kingston

Today – 50 sure signs that autumn is upon us...

1. Strange new programmes start to appear on TV.
2. Men on TV say, "And now we're going straight back to the party conference at Blackpool/Brighton/Bournemouth..." after which they say nothing, because you have just switched them off.
3. You finally throw away the piece of garden furniture you've been meaning to mend all summer.
4. Someone asks you if you're going skiing this winter.
5. Newspapers print the final county cricket analyses.

6. The first football matches are cancelled because of the weather.
7. The *Radio Times* says: "Yes, Angus, Ian and Paul are back again!"
8. Isobars huddle closer together for warmth in the weather chart.
9. You hear someone saying: "Anyone seen my bicycle lately?"
10. Someone further down the road lights a bonfire.
11. The wind changes.
12. The smoke from the bonfire blows across the road.
13. There are multiple pile-ups in the road.
14. Local headlines say: "Police Press Charges against Bonfire Crash Horror Man."
15. The first 1997 calendars appear in the shops.
16. The last 1996 calendars and diaries ("Now 90 per cent off marked price!") vanish from the shops.
17. Women on TV say: "And now more news from the autumn fashion shows!" after which they say nothing else, because you have just switched them off.
18. You overhear people saying: "I can't believe it's less than three months away!"
19. You find yourself wondering where all the hot

- water bottles in the house are.
20. The *Big Issue* sellers look colder than usual.
21. Pubs look more inviting than usual.
22. You start running over little objects in the lane, and think with horror they must be birds or small animals, but actually they're only conkers.
23. You get a postcard from one of your summertime house martin visitors, saying, "Well, we made it to Egypt all right, and it's lovely and warm here, and you must drop in if you're ever passing this way..."
24. You overhear people trying to imitate a Scottish accent, saying: "Aye, the evenings are fair drawing in!"
25. Women's magazines suddenly seem bereft of ideas because although in summer you can have features saying: "Shed Those Pounds in Time For the Holidays!" or "What they'll be Wearing on the Beach This Summer!", it's not possible to have features headed "Put that Flab Back On in Time For Autumn!" or "What they'll be Wearing for Bonfire Night this year!"
26. You realise you have a boot with a hole in the sole.
27. You make a mental note to get the lawn mower serviced in good time this year.

28. You overhear people saying: "You wouldn't think they could still have a hose-pipe ban in weather like this!"
29. You make a mental note to find space to put away the barbecue/deck chairs/hammock.
30. You bring washing in from the line after a sunny day, and it's still damp.
31. You start walking into cobwebs a lot.
32. You see mysterious unmarked lorries going through the streets late at night, which are carrying wrapping paper, artificial snow and Christmas cards to secret destinations.
33. The 1997 *Beano Annual* starts selling out.
34. Haircutters start saying: "Going anywhere this winter, then?"
35. You start overhearing people saying things like: "But we had her over on Boxing Day last year! It's their turn to have her!"
36. Your children start saying that they want the new Spiderman Car for Christmas.
37. You didn't know there was a new Spiderman car.
38. You don't know how your children know.
39. You discover that there

- are whole new TV commercials going out at times when you thought it was safe for children to watch TV.
40. Advertising things like Spiderman cars...
41. The local headlines say: "Police Drop Charges Against Bonfire Crash Horror Man."
42. Haircutters say: "No, I'm not going anywhere either."
43. You hear someone say: "I'm not sure Angus and Ian and Paul are as funny this year."
44. Someone on radio says: "Well, Parliament has reassembled, so that is the last of our morning roasts programmes at 8.40am..."
45. Newspapers try to sum up the impact of party conferences.
46. You see the new Spiderman car actually for sale.
47. You find your bicycle lights, but they're not working.
48. You find your hot-water bottles, but they're leaking.
49. You finally put your deck chairs away, but they're sagging.
50. You hear someone saying: "All right, all right, we'll have her on Boxing Day again, BUT THIS IS THE LAST TIME!"

From Istanbul to Oslo, the market marches on

Onwards and upwards go the world stock markets – what does it mean? The British market hit a new high on Wednesday, with the *Financial Times* index of the largest 100 companies, the Footsie 100, breaching 4,000. But this is not just a UK phenomenon; it is world-wide. On Wall Street the Dow Jones index is within a whisker of breaking through 6,000 for the first time. Markets in Amsterdam, Brussels, Copenhagen, Dublin, Frankfurt, Istanbul and Oslo all hit new highs this week. Only in Tokyo is the stock market still depressed.

So the boom is not a comment on the Blair/Brown political platform, nor a celebration of the Government's performance. It is not about politics at all – though it has profound political and social implications. It is about economics and perhaps about emotion too.

The markets around the world have become convinced that something has changed. There will doubtless be recessions some time in the future, but for the moment professional investors believe that the world economy is on the threshold of some sort of golden age. Inflation, the great external threat to the market system, is moribund. Communism, the great external threat, is dead. While in some parts of the world, particularly Continental Europe, unemployment is still a grave concern, in the US it is down to 5 per cent and seems set to stay there.

This confidence about the state of the world economy may not yet be fully reflected in British or Continental European politics but it is very evident in the US. An opinion poll in *USA Today* on Monday showed that a large majority of Americans believe they are better off than they were four years ago, something that seems to be reinforcing President Clinton's lead in the polls.

The moment that people are convinced that everything is marvellous is usually the moment when things start to go wrong – so perhaps we should be on guard. Share prices at an historic high should carry the same health warning. The professional investment advisers are divided as to whether share prices are "fair value" or grossly over-priced, but hardly anyone is asserting that they are very under-priced. For what it is worth, my own judgement is that prices are indeed too high and that some sort of "adjustment", a weasel word for a fall, will take place by the end of next year. At some stage too, perhaps not for another couple of years, there will be another period of very slow growth, maybe another recession. But the big message carried in the stock market boom is that decent world-wide growth is surely with us.

If this is right, what are the consequences? Think back to the British housing market in the 1960s. Home ownership was climbing but the majority of people did not own their own homes and rented either from private landlords or from the council. The Tories had made it their aim to establish a nation of home-owners and gradually, year by year, the proportion of owner-occupiers climbed. Then came the successive house price booms, which handed wealth to the people who had got on the ladder early, but which also excluded the half of the population who at that stage still rented.

Strong share prices are good news in that they enable companies to raise new capital more cheaply. They are good news in that they reflect



Hamish McRae

Share prices are surging around the world. But will anyone benefit from the booming stock markets other than those who invest in equities?

a genuine improved performance by company managers. But, like rising house prices, they only bring direct benefit to people who are on the ladder, the "haves". This group of "haves" is larger than most people realise, for it includes not only the small group who own shares directly, but also those who have Peps and investment and unit trusts, plus anyone who has a pension invested in the stock market. But this whole group is only about half the country. It does not, for example, include the many people who keep their savings in a bank or building society and whose pension is not linked to the stock market. These people are like the renters of the 1960s: they face the same danger that they will lose out.

This pension point is important. This week the Labour leadership won the conference vote confirming the present government's policy of linking state pensions to prices and not to earnings. People pay their National Insurance all their lives, yet face the prospect of a pretty mean pension when they retire. They are not paying into a segregated pension fund, building up a stock of investments which rise in value. Instead they will simply rely on taxpayers in 2020 or 2030, or whenever they retire, to pay their pensions. They make a gigantic bet on the politics of a generation or more in the future: the willingness of the yet unborn to pay the tax to support an army of elderly people.

The parallel with housing is not exact but it is close enough to be useful. Politically, investors will become a powerful lobby, just like homeowners. Just as governments of both parties were loath to do anything which damaged the interests of owner-occupiers, so they will increasingly become cautious about doing anything that damages the interests of investors. More than this, they will need to increase the ranks of investors – or at least people whose pensions are invested in the market – to take pressure off the publicly financed pension system.

Socially, just as in housing, there is the danger of a growing chasm between the "haves" and the "have nots", those who share in rising prosperity and those who do not. For the right, the response is clear: encourage the creation of a nation of shareholders, to follow the nation of homeowners; encourage more people to get onto the ladder even if the main beneficiaries are those already on it.

For the left, there is a dilemma: there are enormous economic and fiscal advantages in encouraging people to save and invest those savings in the stock market, for this supplies more money to industry and commerce and relieves pressure on taxpayers present and future. But there will always be some who cannot or will not save, and who find the very idea of investing completely alien. They must be brought directly in. Indirectly, they already are. For the market in shares serves two masters. There are those who invest, and reap the returns directly. But there are the rest of us, too, who can only prosper by being part of a successful global economy. And today's booming share prices are a celebration of the way the market system has burst out from the industrial world, across China and South-east Asia to parts of India and Latin America. And even, in a rough and ready way, to Russia and parts of Africa. Some day share prices will, of course, fall back, but the system marches on.

Fergie, Mandy and Paula, we judge you

by Suzanne Moore



Forget the party conference talk of the decent society. It's open season on the intimate details of women's lives

While Mr Blair was giving us his presidential version of a decent society, I could scarcely stop yawning. Decency isn't exactly arousing is it? Indecency is what we prefer to get excited about and thankfully Mr Hamilton has provided some this week. Yet, as if to counter all the hyper-rationality of Blairism, we have binged over the last few days on stories of mad, sad and bad women – Fergie, Mandy Allwood and Paula Yates have played these respective roles. Oh, and there's Mrs DB who wants her dead husband's sperm. What a vision of womanhood has emerged from this popular press. We are irresponsible, greedy nymphomaniacs driven by hormones, obsessive love, daft infatuation, dodgy psychics to all kinds of outrageous behaviour ranging from ignoring medical advice to wearing cocktail dresses in the daytime.

There are two languages being spoken this week and I hesitate to ascribe male and female qualities to them, yet one is the official news agenda of party conference and party politics and the other a far more messy, low-down business of personalities and private lives. It is no longer possible, I feel, to dismiss one set of stories as merely tabloid, as somehow essentially trivial compared to the broadsheet coverage of more serious topics.

It strikes me that there are few more serious topics than the discussions about fertility treatment, selective termination, and the rights of patients than the Allwood case brings about. We may not like the tabloids' way of creating rather than reporting stories but we cannot merely hope it goes away or be so hypocritical that we condemn them while also writing about them a few days later. What starts off as tabloid wheeze ends up on the *Nine O'Clock News*.

The tabloidisation of our culture pushes to the forefront a profound misogyny that plays itself out as mass entertainment. Paula, Fergie, Mandy are all considered fair game because we understand they have made Faustian pacts with the media. None of these women is particularly easy to defend. They are not blameless. But are Bob Geldof, Prince Andrew or Paul Hudson blameless individuals? Still we are invited to phone newspapers in order to say whether we would rather date Fergie or a goat. Some time ago *GQ* emblazoned itself with a picture of Helena Christensen, Michael Hutchence's ex-girlfriend, asking "Would you trade her in for Paula Yates?" Used cars, animals, women – what's the difference? If we so desire we can fax our answer to Mandy Allwood's dilemma "Was she right to try for all eight babies – or should she have terminated some?" The

men in these cases remain shadowy figures. We know more than we could ever want to know about poor Fergie's delusions but Andrew was himself on the phone to Vasso, the psychic who makes Mystic Meg look like the real thing. And what of the infamous No. 1 to 10 of Fergie's various toe-suckers, what of their integrity? Are we asked to fax the papers with our opinions on them? Can we phone with our comments on Geldof, born again champion of fathers' rights? Now that he has been spurred into action by some opium in a Smarties tube, is he a paragon of virtue? Is there a special hotline set up about Allwood's partner Hudson, who hardly emerges from this tragedy as an honourable man? Was he right to urge Mandy to continue with the pregnancy? The Allwood case is simply

the latest in the blitz of cases that erupted over the summer about selective termination, all of which have given much fuel to the anti-abortion lobby. Allwood's loss was told by Professor Jack Scarsbrick, chairman of Life, is "less sad than if the horrible techniques of selective termination had been used". Really? None of this confronts the reality that fertility treatment often leads to cases where patients are given the choice of selective termination. The key word is choice. Allwood made hers and, as Wendy Savage said with dignity, "A patient has the right to refuse medical advice." In order to make those choices, however, we need to be informed. The reporting of this case shows the terrible confusion we are in. The language is loaded with moral judgements. While doctors talk of spare embryos,

Mandy's babies, tiny footcases, became in tabloids "tots" with pink and blue tags. We know these desperate details because Allwood sold her sorry tale, which also meant that her capacity to be a good mother was called into question. The same could be said of Paula Yates who, while spoon feeding us the salacious details of her life, is being judged on her lifestyle rather than her parenting skills. As silly as she is –



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Tired of all this miserable ME stuff

Aargh. Not another moaning article about ME. The Royal College of Physicians, Psychiatrists and General Practitioners produced a report this week about chronic fatigue syndrome (unhelpfully called ME or yuppiefu) showing that 1-2.5 per cent of the population are affected by it. And, as always, a report on chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) acts as cue for another round of depressing arguments in the papers and on TV.

If it isn't some cynic sneering at "yuppiefu" malingerers, it's the dismal story of a sufferer condemned to year after dreary year of inactivity. But don't worry. I promise the next 1,000 words will be a drone-free zone. Here's some good news. Lots of people get CFS for months or for years, and they get better. And I mean properly better, not just well enough to drag themselves to work four days a week, or well enough to sit quietly in a corner at a party before catching an early bus home. They (or should I say we, for I confess I was once a sufferer) recover enough to be as bouncy and as boisterous as ever we were before we got ill.

The trouble is we rarely get a word in edgeways. To one side of us the long-term persistent sufferers, their friends and their relatives, suggest we didn't really have CFS at all. The other –



Yvette Cooper

The cynics call it yuppiefu, the long-term sufferers peddle doom and gloom. But you can have chronic fatigue syndrome and recover to see it as a normal illness

"it's all in the mind" lobby – claim our recovery shows the illness was just stress or emotional trauma that passed once we pulled ourselves together.

Desperate to leave all the limps, and the fuzzy-headedness far behind and get on with our lives we never mention CFS again. After all, people will think we are bonkers, unstable, susceptible to relapse – or just deeply boring. The result is that the cynics and the chronics hog the airways.

So it's time to correct the balance. I was sent to see a specialist in chronic fatigue syndrome. Dr William Weir, a consultant physician at the Royal Free and Coppel's Wood Hospital in north London. According to Dr Weir, 80-90 per cent of people who get chronic fatigue syndrome recover within two years. Even those who remain ill for a long time still have a chance of making a full recovery. As Dr Weir points out, "I've seen people who've recovered after 10, 15 or even in one case 17 years."

In my case, the suffocating fatigue took three years finally to lift. Admittedly the first year was grim: nothing but Richard and Judy, the rollicks of Ramsey Street and trashy magazines to fill my days. I couldn't walk as far as the tube station without crumbling from exhaustion, nor concentrate on anything more com-

plex than Mills and Boon. After 12 months, as I started to recover and began working part time, my strength slowly grew. After two years, I returned tentatively to full-time work, although for a while I was unusually susceptible to colds and flu.

Now I climb mountains, canoe rivers, swim regularly, and work long hours without even thinking about my health. Friends who found me a calm and soothing presence while I was too exhausted and spacey to communicate much are once again exasperated by my lively, strappy behaviour.

Am I cruising for a relapse? I don't think so. My father suffered from something similar – his lasted about a year – 30 years ago. Whatever it was, it never returned.

Nor was my illness, as the cynics would like to suggest, merely a temporary mental aberration. If I was bonkers then, I am still bonkers now in my rude good health. Nothing has changed in my emotional state or my outlook on the world. I suffered no trauma, no unusual stress, and I wasn't depressed. At least I wasn't until I'd been ill for several months, when the full horror of incarceration with daytime television became clear. Misery took hold, I swallowed a few Prozac, and misery went away again. But I was still ill.

In fact the evidence that chronic fatigue syndrome is completely distinct from depression is overwhelming. The brain scans of CFS sufferers and the depressed display very different patterns. Dr Weir believes that sooner or later scientists will discover a single common denominator for all cases of chronic fatigue syndrome, whether it lasts six months or six years. "It may well be a very common virus that affects lots of people, but doesn't cause illness in most of us."

The trouble is that until that virus – or whatever it is – is identified, people with CFS will continue to be told that their problems are psychological, and blamed for their inability to leap up and recover.

Faced with a sceptical public, and a media caricature of the illness as yuppiefu, the reaction from ME support groups is perhaps understandable. To convince us the illness is real and awful they provide us with gloomy case studies of people confined to their houses for years. Dealing predominantly with those who have not recovered, they tell us the prognosis for CFS is terrible. And they bemoan the lack of sympathy they receive from the medical profession and the outside world.

Unfortunately such gloom-mongering is counter-productive. A potentially sympathetic

audience is turned off by the portrayal of CFS sufferers as victims. What starts as pity for their terrible plight turns quickly to contempt and boredom.

More important, sufferers are made to feel even worse by the overwhelming impression that they have no hope of recovering. The most dispiriting thing I did when I first fell ill was open a self-help book on ME. Within three pages, I was convinced my illness would last forever. Luckily, I had doctors and family who treated CFS as an ordinary, if unpleasant, illness, from which I would naturally recover.

I don't feel like a victim for having had chronic fatigue syndrome. I never did at the time either. Infuriatingly for others, I actually feel quite proud of the fact that I endured an extremely boring and frustrating few years without going completely crazy. Nor, sadly, can I say with my hand on my heart that I became a better person because of CFS. For a few months when I first got back to health I rejoiced in silly things like riding a bike. I enjoyed the world, and I felt great empathy with the elderly, the heavily pregnant, the disabled, and anyone who had trouble moving fast. Now I tend to take everything for granted again – just like everyone else. I feel normal again. We should start treating CFS as a normal illness.

سید احمد علی

Spottiswoode attacks British Gas 'machine'

MICHAEL HARRISON

Clare Spottiswoode, the gas industry regulator, yesterday launched an astonishing attack on British Gas, accusing the company of attempting to undermine her as part of an orchestrated campaign to fight price controls on its pipeline business, TransCo.

Ms Spottiswoode, the director general of gas supply, said she had heard that the British Gas board, led by chairman Richard Giordano, had commissioned a psychological profile of her as part of the campaign. Ms Spottiswoode also referred by name to one of British Gas's public relations advisers, Angus Maitland.

The outburst against British Gas and its "huge machine" came as the company rejected the TransCo price controls as "unjustified and unwarrantable" and announced it was taking its case to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Ms Spottiswoode has been at loggerheads with the company for the past three months since it described her proposals as "the biggest smash-and-grab raid" in corporate history. They would cut £28 off the average bill but reduce TransCo's revenues by £650m a year and,

according to the company, put 10,000 jobs and the integrity of the gas system at risk.

Yesterday Ms Spottiswoode said: "They have a huge machine, they have their lobbyists, their advisers, their Angus Maitlands of this world. We do not have the resources to get into this."

British Gas seemed to think, she said, that its "huge publicity campaign will affect what we think of what the MMC panel think". But, she said, its tactics would prove counter-productive.

She said British Gas had had a "pretty vitriolic" relationship with her predecessor at Ofgas, James MacKinnon, and that its behaviour was "just in character" now. "To lose one regulatory relationship is bad news," she said. "To lose two is extremely bad news."

Last night the company rejected the criticisms. Philip Rogers, British Gas's deputy chairman, said: "I was both saddened and surprised to hear her comments. We have studiously ensured that we have focused on the issues. We have deliberately not focused on personalities because that would be wholly inappropriate."

Mr Rogers added that he was "astounded" to hear it had ordered a psychological profile

of Ms Spottiswoode. "I have absolutely no knowledge of any such profile being carried out."

Mr Maitland, who runs the Maitland Consultancy and also gives British Telecom and the National Grid PR advice on relationships with their regulators, said Ms Spottiswoode's comments were a mystery.

"This campaign has been fought on the issues. I have never spoken to any journalists about Clare Spottiswoode herself. I have concentrated on the issues. If anyone has been manipulating the campaign, it is not us."

During his price review of BT, the industry regulator, Don Cruickshank, is understood to have been concerned that a campaign was being mounted directly against him.

Ms Spottiswoode and her advisers have been the subject of some personalised critiques. Last weekend, one Sunday newspaper wrote how Ms Spottiswoode had been elevated into her job from "a small and not particularly successful software consultancy" and was part of a network of academics and regulators who belonged to Hayek's so-called "Austrian" school of economics linked with Birmingham University. The MMC inquiry into



At loggerheads: Clare Spottiswoode, gas industry regulator, and Richard Giordano, chairman of British Gas



TransCo is expected to last at least six months. However, Mr Rogers said this would have no effect on the plan to demerge British Gas's trading arm from

TransCo by spring next year. Decisions on future dividend policy, he said, could only be made once the outcome of the MMC inquiry was known.

Analysts calculate that the payout would have to be trimmed by at least 10 per cent if the Ofgas proposals are implemented.

British Gas said that, on asset valuation and depreciation, Ms Spottiswoode had ignored earlier MMC rulings.

Comment, page 21

Grid told to reduce its prices by 20%

MICHAEL HARRISON

The National Grid was contemplating last night whether to follow the lead of British Gas and go to the MMC after its regulator, Professor Stephen Littlechild, announced price controls which, though softened slightly, will still remove £1bn in revenues over the next four years.

The company has until the end of this month to decide whether to accept the proposals, which would cut £4 off the average electricity bill by requiring the Grid to reduce prices by 20 per cent next year and by 4 per cent in the following three.

Prof Littlechild said his final set of proposals were "tough but realistic", representing a "reasonable balance" between shareholders and customers. The regulator has relaxed the formula compared with his initial proposals in August so that the Grid will have to achieve a 4 per cent annual improvement in efficiency instead of 6 per cent.

He has also decided to allow it an extra £60m of capital expenditure over the four years and increased the size of the asset base on which it can earn a rate of return by reducing his estimate of the value of Energis, the Grid's telecoms business, from £400m to £250m.

The Grid declined to comment yesterday, other than to say it would give its response by 30 October.

However, the net effect is only to allow it an extra £200m in revenues compared with the regulator's initial proposals which the Grid said amounted to "expropriation" of exceptional gains. The proposals, it said, were "harsh, inconsistent and ill-founded" and would require "significant changes if they are to be acceptable".

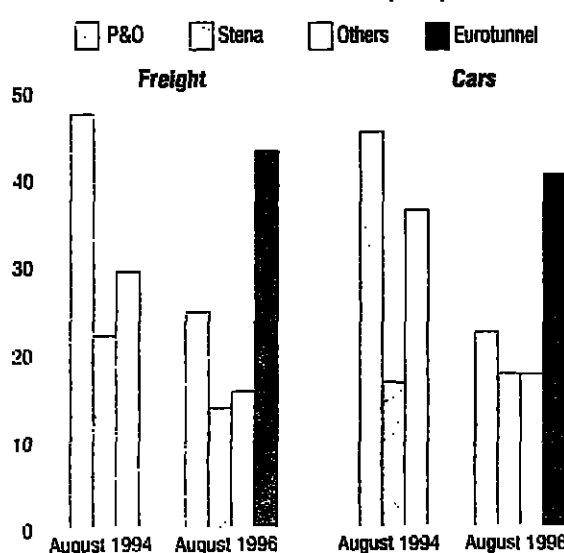
Despite a lobbying campaign by Grid investors, during which 2,500 shareholders wrote to Ofwat and 10 big institutional investors submitted written evidence, Prof Littlechild said he saw no justification for a further relaxation in the price controls.

A number of large shareholders are thought to have urged the Grid to take its case to the MMC. But analysts were divided yesterday on whether it would. "My feeling is that the Grid will probably accept the proposals," said Andrew Stone at Daiwa Securities. Another analyst said: "I don't think the cost cutting required is too drastic despite all the hulling and hawing."

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P&O and Stena combine forces to take on the Tunnel

EUROTUNNEL'S DOMINANCE on Dover-Calais route, % of journeys



MAGNUS GRIMOND

Lord Sterling, chairman of P&O, yesterday predicted big job cuts but no price rises on cross-Channel routes after agreeing a £410m merger of its Dover-Calais ferry business with the rival operation run by Stena of Sweden.

The deal, which brings together the biggest and second-biggest ferry operators on the busiest part of the Channel, is the most dramatic move yet by ferry companies to combat the price war sparked off by the opening of the Channel Tunnel. Prices have fallen by up to half over the past three years.

The deal was well received in the City and by rivals yesterday, with P&O's shares rising 20p to 645p. It is the latest in a string of deals by the shipping-to-construction group to revitalise

its image among investors. Last month it announced a £2.6bn merger of its container interests with Royal Nedlloyd of the Netherlands, followed by a £25.3m deal to buy out Royal Nedlloyd's half share in the North Sea Ferries joint venture.

Lord Sterling described that acquisition as "the very first step" in the rationalisation of the cross-Channel ferry industry, triggered by the Government's decision in July to lift restrictions on mergers and collaboration.

Yesterday he said the new merged business, to be called P&O Stena Line, would aim to achieve cost savings of £75m by the end of next year. A substantial part of that will come from withdrawing ships plying the so-called short sea routes, which include Dover to Zeebrugge and Dover to Calais,

with Stena's Invicta and P&O's *Pride of Bruges* being taken out of service, leading to between 350 and 400 redundancies. Estimated cost savings are around £15m per ship.

Further withdrawals will be made next year. Although neither side would be drawn on numbers, Lord Sterling said the combined fleet would not be cut "drastically" and one estimate suggested another one or two ships were earmarked to go. Before the reductions, P&O will contribute its eight ships on the route to the new venture and Stena the five it operates. P&O will own 60 per cent of the shares in the venture, but have just 50 per cent of the votes.

Job cuts from the combined workforce of 5,500 on the short sea routes could exceed 1,000. Lord Sterling said he would be "surprised" to see fewer than

that number of redundancies, following cost savings in marketing, port operations and administration. Stena said its headquarters in Ashford, Kent, which employs 450 people, would have to be reduced in size, although some staff would move to Dover, where the new line's head office would be based.

Lord Sterling had some comfort too for ferry travellers, suggesting there would be "no change in prices" as a result of the deal and promising that P&O would remain a low-price operator. It would be "quite ridiculous to assume that there would be any increases at all," he claimed.

The merger must be cleared by the Office of Fair Trading, which could trigger a monopolies investigation, but cross-Channel rivals generally

welcomed news of the link-up yesterday. Eurotunnel, the Channel Tunnel operator, said the rationalisation of capacity was "a logical step which should have been done earlier". Graham Ede, managing director of Hoverspeed, said: "It might get some commonsense back into the industry." William Gibson of the Passenger Shipping Association said it would bring stability into what was a very disordered situation.

The merger is expected to boost the profitability of P&O's ferry operations, which saw profits crash from £24.8m to just £500,000 in the first half of this year. David Elmore of Kleinwort Benson Securities expected losses at P&O European Ferries to deepen to nearly £10m in the second half, but could see profits of £30m next year.

Comment, page 21

Even the bulls take a cautious view of Footsie

DIANE COYLE Economics Editor

With the poetry of round numbers, the FTSE 100 index ended yesterday at exactly 4,000, 15 points lower than Wednesday's record. Experts are divided about whether shares stand teetering on the brink of a big correction from that symbolic level or are simply pausing before surging to new highs.

The common ground is that the most recent gains in share prices in London and New York are due to the Federal Reserve's surprise decision not to increase US interest rates last week. Uncertainty about when that move will take place is what divides the bulls and bears.

Nick Knight, equity strategist at Nomura, said today's jobs and earnings figures for the US would be decisive in the short term. "We're in for a big move. Next week the index will be at least a hundred points from the current level, in one direction or the other."

If the increase in the number

of jobs last month turns out to be more than the expected 175,000, fans of an impending rise in rates will return. A lower figure and, "we'll go ballistic," as Mr Knight put it.

New figures yesterday were on the Fed's side, with orders for durable goods dropping 1.9 per cent in August, and an increase of 11,000 to 340,000 in the number of new unemployment claims last week.

The gloomy case for share prices in coming weeks rests on the view that the value of equities has raced ahead of government bonds, thanks to undue optimism about inflation and interest rates. When interest rates do rise to choke off inflationary pressure, stock markets will fall.

The bullish case rests partly on a rosy view of the interest rate outlook, but also on predictions that there will be a strong flow of liquidity into equities. Recent official figures show that institutions put an extra £4.3bn into cash in the second quarter of the year, nearly

twice as much as they invested in UK equities.

For all their talk, even the bulls are cautious, their forecasts for the FTSE index at the end of this year ranging from 3,750 to 4,200, compared to the bears' range of 3,600 to 3,700.

The optimists admit there are risks. One is the possibility of higher taxes on the corporate sector either in next month's Budget or after the election.

Another is the danger that a new row over Europe would halt the gains gilts have made, underpinning share prices during the past week. The spread between 10-year yields on gilts and German government bonds has narrowed from 180 to 155 basis points.

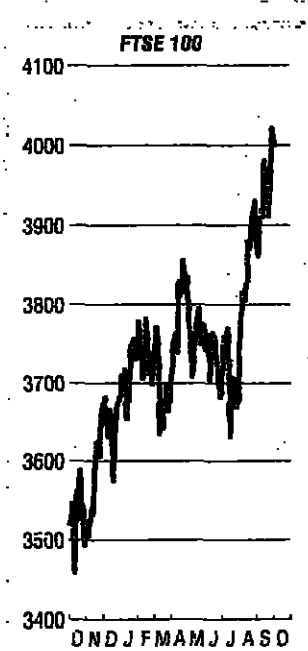
This element of political risk in the UK could go the other way. Richard Kersley at BZW described it as one of the reasons for optimism. He said: "Any commitment by Labour to join the single currency could be good news because it would bring the gilts spread over German yields down towards zero."

BULLS AND BEARS SQUARE UP IN THE CITY

Philip Isherwood: Kleinwort Benson. Any uncharted territory feels dangerous, so short term there will be a temptation to take profits. But institutions have built up their cash holdings and will have to start coming back into the market.

Richard Davidson: Morgan Stanley. There are reasons for weakness in the short term but I'm still a bull over the next year. Any commitment by Labour to joining the single currency would be very optimistic because it would lower UK bond yields.

Richard Kersley: BZW. Institutions have a strong cash position, and it is difficult to justify not reinvesting that. Gilts have also started to catch up to other European markets, which is providing strong backing for equities.



Nick Knight: Nomura. In the UK the story is jam today, pain tomorrow. The economy will be burning up after the election, inflation will deteriorate and we'll get higher interest rates.

Bob Sample: NatWest Markets. The political cycle means I'd be reluctant to chase the market any higher. There is a lot to worry about this side of the election even though Labour will probably be fairly responsible.

Mark Brown: Hoare Govett. What has been driving the market is good, old-fashioned cheap money. The free lunch will come to an end when interest rates go up, when we do get some signs of inflationary pressure. So far there hasn't been much sign of it.

Hamleys head quits six months into the job

MAGNUS GRIMOND

Hamleys, owner of the famous toyshop in London's Regent Street, saw its shares dip yesterday after announcing the departure of Geoffrey Cullinan, who only became chief executive six months ago.

Mr Cullinan, who is expected to receive a payoff in the region of £100,000, was appointed in March having helped found his own management consultancy firm, OGC&C Strategy Consultants. Howard Dyer, chairman, denied that there had been any personality clashes with the rest of the board. "In my view, it was the transition from consultancy to operations which didn't suit him."

The news sent shares in the group down 5p to 365.5p, despite the announcement of an 18 per cent rise in half-year profits to £1.98m.

Mr Dyer said the board had decided to appoint Mr Cullinan earlier in the year to give strategic direction to the group and complement the operational strengths of Stephen Woodbridge, managing director. "I like him. He's a good man and he's an interesting man. But both the company and he decided it wasn't the right appointment and he has resigned. The company will be paying compensation, but he will continue to help with a number of development projects under way," Mr Dyer said.

Mr Cullinan, who was being paid £150,000 on a one-year contract, joined Hamleys after his company was bought out by Coopers & Lybrand Associates in 1991. Prior to that, he

was with Booz, Allen & Hamilton, the international management consultancy firm.

Mr Dyer said compensation had been agreed in principle, but he would not reveal what it was as the deal has yet to be signed off. It would not, however, be the full annual amount. A replacement chief executive, who would come from the retailing sector, would be appointed in the new year, he said.

One analyst said the departure had hit the shares, but



Geoffrey Cullinan: 'Move to operations didn't suit him'

"There was no reason to be worried from Hamleys' point of view". All the directors led by Mr Dyer, who helped revitalise the group after losses in the early 1990s, remained aboard, he said.

Hamleys said profits at its main Regent Street store had grown 17 per cent in the half year to July, despite the impact on tourist numbers of the IRA bombing campaign and Tube strikes in the capital.

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STOCK MARKETS					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change(%)	1996 High	1996 Low
FTSE 100	4000.00	+15.10	+0.4	4015.10	3632.30
FTSE 250	4451.90	+2.30	+0.1	4569.60	4015.30
FTSE 350	1991.80	+6.20	+0.3	1999.00	1816.60
FT Small Cap	2178.45	+9.61	+0.4	2244.36	1954.06
FT All Share	1966.75	+5.57	+0.3	1971.32	1791.95
New York	5907.26	+6.71	+0.1	5983.97	5032.94
Tokyo	21331.50	+167.10	+0.8	22664.80	19734.70
Hong Kong	12014.56	+62.68	+0.5	12014.56	10204.67
Frankfurt	2678.50	closed		2678.50	2253.36

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES					
Short sterling	UK medium gilt	US long bond	10yr Euro	10yr US	10yr UK
3m	6.00	7.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
6m	6.00	7.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
1yr	6.00	7.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
2yr	6.00	7.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
3yr	6.00	7.00	6.00	6.00	6.00

CURRENCIES					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change(%)	1996 High	1996 Low
£/\$	1.5661	-0.14	-1.9854	1.5661	1.5661
£/¥	1.5630	-0.23	-1.5825	1.5630	1.5630
DM/\$	2.3971	+0.36	2.2631	2.3971	2.3971
¥/\$	174.573	+0.595	158.986	174.573	174.573
£/DM	1.11470	-0.28	-100.465	1.11470	1.11470



COMMENT

These companies were not privatised to be run as consumer co-operatives. Investors bought them in good faith, believing in the sanctity of a regulatory contract which appears to have been thrown to the winds.

Public loses faith as utility regulators flounder

Another day, another row over utility regulation – or rather, two of them. Yesterday we had British Gas flouncing off to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in protest at Clare Spottiswoode's proposed price controls. With Professor Stephen Littlechild refusing to compromise his proposed controls to any significant degree, the National Grid could soon follow suite.

Plainly there is something wrong with utility regulation that it could produce such spectacular, damaging and explosive argument. If Ms Spottiswoode is right about British Gas, that it has been conducting a carefully orchestrated dirty tricks campaign to undermine her credibility and standing, then this is not an acceptable state of affairs in a mature democracy. Certainly the allegations demand public investigation.

By the same token, if British Gas is right about the degree to which the regulator has been trying to meddle in its affairs, a degree according to British Gas which is tantamount to attempting to run the company, then this is equally unacceptable. These companies were not privatised to be run as consumer co-operatives. Investors bought them in good faith, believing in the sanctity of a regulatory contract which appears to have been thrown to the winds.

Price regulation is accused of being too lax on the one hand and too harsh on the other. It is hardly surprising that both the public and the City are losing all faith in it. Meanwhile the regulators are left floundering

around, attempting to match each other with ever greater displays of regulatory machismo. Prof Littlechild was undoubtedly influenced by the example set by his counterpart at Ofgas in what he did yesterday. Unless of course it is sheer coincidence that both the Grid and TransCo have been instructed to make a one-off cut in charges of 20 per cent followed by virtually identical real price reductions in subsequent years.

Unless there is a radical change of heart or some interesting mental gymnastics at the Grid, it looks to be heading the same way as British Gas to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Ms Spottiswoode massaged her final proposals so as to appear to have given ground but kidded no-one, least of all British Gas, that she had compromised in any significant fashion. Likewise the concessions put forward yesterday by Prof Littlechild amount to relatively little. He is offering to relax the efficiency targets the Grid must meet and allow it a rate of return in the middle of the range on a slightly bigger asset base.

It shouldn't be happening that these regulatory reviews are ending with the MMC. That they are is indicative of a failure in the system. The sooner utility regulation is overhauled to make it more accountable, transparent, and professional, the better. The present set-up seems to be pretty much on its last legs. The next Government should make reform a matter of urgency.

Ferry merger will bring back real competition

It is not often that a newspaper like the *Independent*, which believes in the principles of the free market and open competition, finds itself in support of a merger that will reduce competition, cost jobs and lead to higher prices for the consumer, but the P&O/Stena link-up announced yesterday may be one of those rare cases. Certainly Lord Sterling, chairman of P&O, puts a compelling case for it, even if he does overegg the argument a bit. Ever since the Channel tunnel was first sanctioned by the British and French governments, it was inevitable that one day this would happen.

When Eurotunnel was raising finance for the *le grande* project, it came out with some wildly overoptimistic forecasts of cross-Channel traffic and tariffs to further its cause and persuade investors, bankers and politicians that the tunnel could co-exist perfectly happily with the ferry operators. They were, of course, never any more than self-serving nonsense. No industry could ever hope to add on such a vast chunk of capacity and expect the market to grow large enough overnight to fill it. The reality was always likely to be a vicious price war, with all the usual fall-out from such fights.

By merging, what the two ferry operators are in essence doing is returning the position commercially to where it was before the

tunnel arrived. In the past, there were two main ferry operators on the chief Anglo-French trunk routes, plus a number of smaller ones. The tunnel increased the number of competitors to three. The merger will reduce them to two once more, with the also-rans following up in the rear. The fact that Eurotunnel is privately urging the authorities to agree on this merger would in normal circumstances be a reason for the utmost suspicion. The dangers of a cosy duopoly developing are all too real. But the fact of the matter is that for the time being there is far too much capacity on these routes and as a consequence everyone involved is bleeding to death.

The idea, seriously advanced in support of this merger, that it will create a powerful new competitor for the tunnel is largely tosh. This merger is not about creating more competition; it is about reducing it and increasing prices. But for a change, these unworthy ends seem largely justified. The alternative is death by a thousand knives for most of the ferry operators and an eventual near monopoly for the tunnel.

Proposals compare with last decade's Big Bang

Sometimes it is all too easy in analysing City matters to miss the wood for the trees. This seems to be true of the Stock Exchange's new automated trading system, which will be-

gin operation late next year. Debate over the Stock Exchange's future has been clouded and obscured by a seemingly endless series of technical rows over price disclosure rules, the stamp duty regime, and other points of detail. But the really important part seems largely to have been missed. Standing back from it all, what has actually emerged is a surprisingly radical set of proposals that bear some comparison with those introduced at Big Bang a decade ago this month.

From late next year, there will be no market makers in FTSE 100 stocks; trades will be executed automatically on the computerised order book. Really large trades will still be carried out away from the order book, but once completed their prices will be published. When the big securities firms deal in the FTSE 100 stocks that make up two thirds of the £1.5bn-£2bn daily market volume, their only protection will be the size of their capital and their trading skills, not the special market making privileges which are at present built into the rulebooks.

There will be nothing to stop any other exchange members competing with them on equal terms. It has taken a long time for the stock market to start practicing the free market principles it so likes to champion for others, but finally we seem to be getting there. Michael Lawrence, unceremoniously sacked by the market's big battalions for the high handed way he attempted to reform the trading system, is entitled to feel at least a little pleased at the revolution he fomented.

Ross plans board restructuring at Littlewoods group

NIGEL COPE

James Ross, the new chairman of the Littlewoods retail and football pools group, is planning a big shake-up of the company's board structure which could see the last remaining members of the controlling Moores family leave the board.

Mr Ross, who joined from Cable & Wireless in May, said the changes would be made in the next few months. They will include the creation of three categories of director: executive; non-executive; and link directors. This last group will be responsible for communicating information between the board and the 32 members of the Moores family which control the Liverpool-based company. He said they would "not necessarily" be members of the family, who would have to compete for places against external candidates.

After the recent retirement of John Moores, there are two members of the family on the board. They are Lady Grantchester, the eldest daughter of the Littlewoods founder, the late Sir John Moores, and her son James Swenson-Taylor.

Mr Ross is confident that the changes can be achieved with



James Ross: Plans three categories of director

the family's agreement as the Moores signed a shareholders' charter earlier this year which meant that they were no longer guaranteed seats on the board.

This followed the family's decision in January not to pursue two £1bn takeover bids for the company, one from former chief executive Barry Dale, the other from N Brown, the mail order company, and Iceland, the frozen food retailer.

Mr Ross said the family had no intention of selling any of the company's parts. He added that the family was keen to stay with the company.

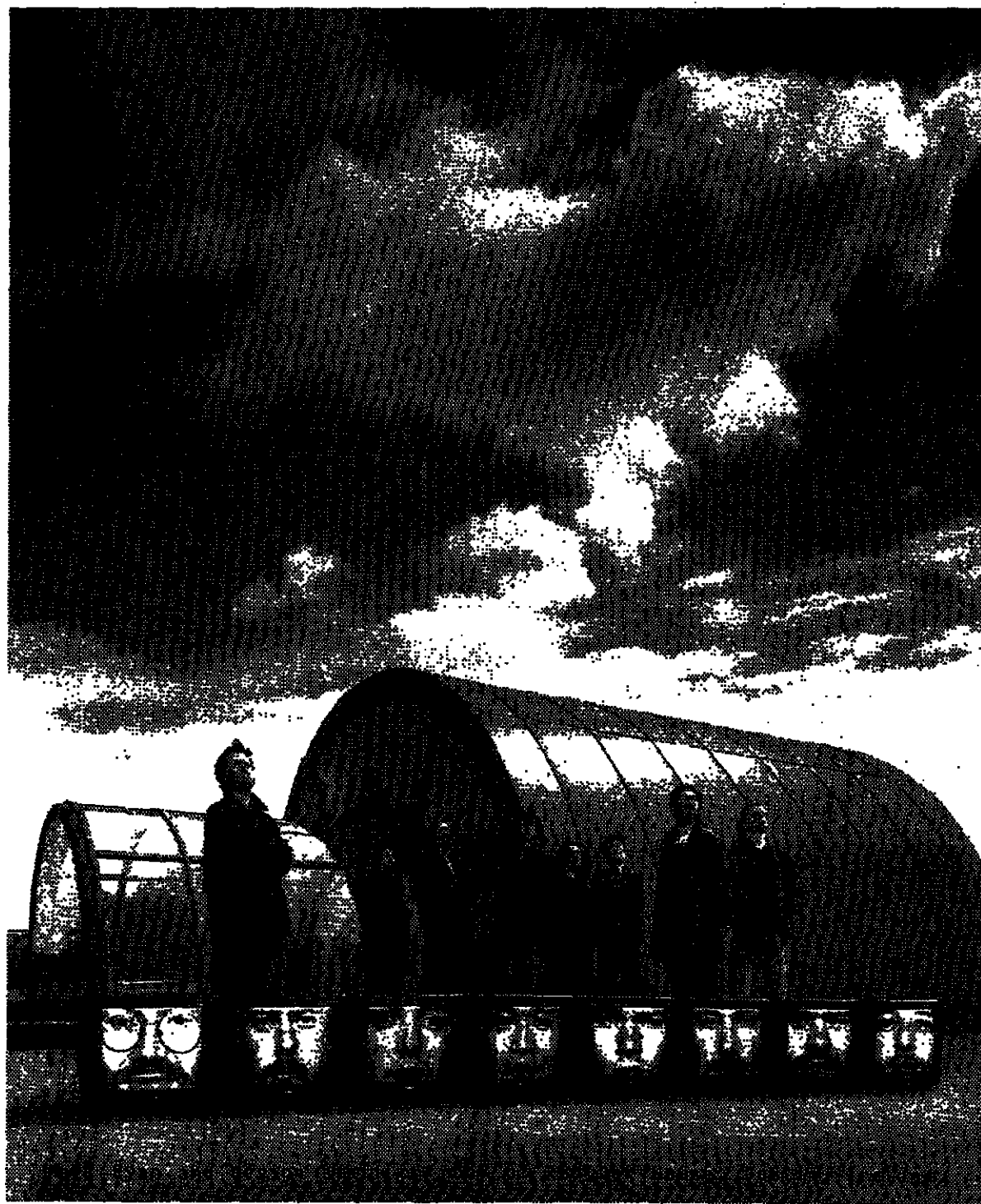
"If you strip out inflation, this company's results have stagnated for almost a decade. The attraction for me is to take a company with latent potential and in a period of three to five years really get it motoring."

Mr Ross also heralded a new spirit of openness within the company. It met City analysts for the first time yesterday, though denied this was a prelude to a float. Yesterday's results for the six months to 30 June was its first ever interim results statement.

Mr Ross denied the company was seeking to behave like a public company. "We are trying to behave like a well-managed company." He also pledged to be more open with all the company's stakeholders including suppliers, joint venture partners and potential new employees.

In the six months to June, Littlewoods' pre-tax profits fell 24 per cent to £12.5m. Group sales fell by 5 per cent to £995m. In the retail business, which includes the chain stores, sales improved by 7 per cent with the bottom line turning from the previous year's £4m loss to a £4m profit. Sales at the football pools business fell by 29 per cent to £245m. But profits improved by 6.5 per cent to £11.5m.

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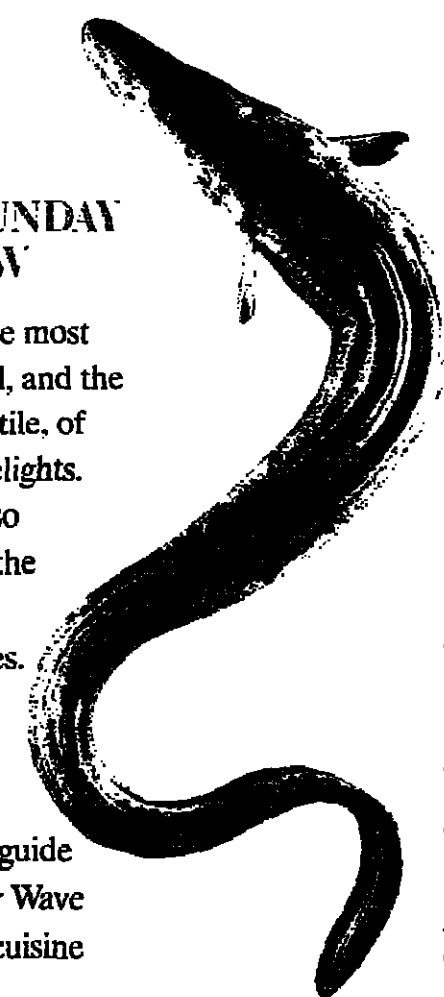


<http://www.lg.co.kr/>

IN THIS WEEKEND'S INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

IN THE SUNDAY REVIEW

Fish are the most underrated, and the most versatile, of culinary delights. They're also flavour of the month at smart tables. Don't miss Michael Bateman's three-part guide to the New Wave of piscine cuisine



The Tory report: what have the past 17 years of Conservative rule actually achieved? Peter Kellner and Paul Barker find the truth behind the statistics

Love on the Internet – private life and the Cultural Revolution

and in real life

Dressed for success, but who's impressed? Louise Chunn on the British working wardrobe. Plus: the Saffy Syndrome – are your parents so hip it hurts?

business

Hamleys' satellite stores take off

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Hamleys' announcement that it is parting company with chief executive Geoffrey Cullinan after just six months took the shine off another cracking set of results from the toyshop group. The departure will scratch the reputation of chairman Howard Dyer a little, as yesterday's 7p dip in the shares to 365.5p reflects. But he is undoubtedly right to cut his losses early with a manager who, it appears, could not make the transition from consultancy to hands-on management. Whatever lies behind this spat at the top, the original team which has overseen a near-doubling of the share price since flotation in May 1994 remains intact.

In the first six months to 27 July, they have overseen an 18 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £1.98m. The successful formula being rolled out by Mr Dyer and his colleagues has been to use the famous store in London's Regent Street as a basis for "satellite" operations at main tourist entry points, such as Heathrow's Terminal 4 and the Channel Tunnel. It is a strategy belatedly being followed by Liberty, Hamleys' Regent Street neighbour.

The modest 4 per cent growth in sales in the period reflects the absence this time of shipments of "Skylanders" packs, the children's presents which Hamleys supplies to British Airways for distribution to its passengers. Any problems with this three-year contract appear to be on BA's side and the rest of the business seems to be storming ahead in what is the seasonally weaker half.

The powerhouse remains Regent Street, which accounts for close to three-quarters of group turnover and is highly operationally geared, with operating margins of over 50 per cent. Regent Street raised profits 17 per cent on a sales increase of just 5.5 per cent, struggling off a 23 per cent rise in rent, terrorist bombs and tube strikes.

The House of Toys chain of toyshop concessions remains a longer-term prospect. The business just about broke-even in the first half, but full-year profits should easily get into six figures. The group is breaking out of its base within House of Fraser stores, with a 4,000 foot John Menzies concession in Edinburgh's Princes Street and another in Arncliffe in Dublin after Christmas.

But the real excitement lies in the newer operations. The two satellites opened last year at the Channel Tunnel and at Schiphol Airport in Holland saw sales rises of between 23 per cent and 159 per cent. Singapore Airport, a joint venture with a Swiss company, is already going well and a larger franchised store due to start next year in Saudi Arabia could be the prototype for similar stores in the Far East by 1998/99.

With minimal costs for these developments, cash will continue to pile up. Hamleys will look for acquisitions or hand some money back to shareholders. Profits could hit £7.5m this year, to give a prospective p/e of 17. A firm hold.

Nothing virtual about this drop

One of the dilemmas facing investors these days is that companies cashing in on the dramatic technological changes sweeping the world are almost by definition some of the market's riskiest investments. Shareholders in Virtuality, including those who stumped up for a placing at 280p earlier this year, had a harsh awakening to this fact yesterday after the virtual reality specialist's shares collapsed by a third to 140p.

After coming to the market three years ago at 170p, they have enjoyed a rollercoaster ride as early bid speculation was replaced by the far-from-virtual reality of profits warnings, slumping sales and rapidly reined-in brokers' forecasts.

Half-year figures to June revealed a

much worse-than-expected loss of £3.78m, compared to last year's interim deficit of £583,000 after sales fell from £6.27m to £3.54m. There was a loss per share of 13.4p (loss of 2.3p).

Virtuality is passing through a difficult transition year as it lessens its dependence on arcade entertainment equipment and moves into lower-ticket home entertainment virtual reality headsets. At the same time it is transforming itself from a designer and manufacturer of equipment to a licensor of intellectual property.

With the technology of graphics moving so quickly and the cost and power of rival products moving against the company, there is an awful lot going on at the same time. Just when Virtuality needed a bit of stability from its core games business to tide it over the transition, the cycle swung sharply against it.

As a result, the handful of analysts who follow the company were busy yesterday with their red pens and expectations of the full-year loss ranged from £3.5m to £6m. If that seems like a big range, it is because no one really has a clue what is in store. Next year, brokers think sales of a new headset product in Japan will result in profits

of anywhere between £400,000 and £2m.

As the basis for an investment it is all pretty unsatisfactory and Virtuality shares should remain the preserve of people closer to this fast-changing industry than the average investor or gamblers on one of the business's larger players snapping the company up for its technical know-how. Even after the large fall yesterday great caution is recommended.

Oriental looks mouthwatering

Cynics would argue that massive first-day premiums on small new issues are among the most reliable signs of the top of a bull market. For the increasing number of bears fretting about the state of the market, the big jumps on first dealings in Ultra Electronics and Oriental Restaurants would have served as bright red, flashing, warning lights.

Of the two, the jump at Oriental looks the more intriguing as this is a company in its infancy, running only four restaurants although with ambitious plans to roll its Thai and Chinese outlets across London and then to the provinces. The shares, placed at 154p, cleared 200p before settling to a still-impressive 186p.

Established in 1988 under the Business Expansion Scheme, the company has been a fantastic investment for the handful of City investors who used the generous tax relief of the BES to put in as little as 4p a share eight years ago. Their hunch that there would be demand for relatively upmarket oriental restaurants in the City and West End proved correct and the Sri Siam, Sri City and Imperial City venues are among the most popular lunching spots in the square mile.

Recent estimates have put growth in the eating out market in the UK at 7 per cent a year for the foreseeable future and the ethnic food part of that market is growing even faster. Thai cuisine is the fastest sub-sector of all, so Oriental ought to be looking forward to some pretty mouthwatering growth.

The recent history is impressive. Operating profits in 1994 of £456,000 grew to £729,000 in the year to March 1995 and in the latest period had grown again to £966,000. It is little wonder that the company has decided to pay Hock Ann Chua, its managing director, £320,000 to cap his performance-related bonus.

On the basis of an expected 25 per cent growth in pre-tax profits for the year to March, the shares trade on a prospective p/e ratio of about 17. The shares will hold onto their early gain.

Problems with planes hit profits at Inspirations

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

Inspirations, one of Britain's leading tour operators, stunned the City yesterday with a warning that it would do no better than break even in the year to September just finished, compared with analysts' expectations of a £7.7m profit. Shares in the travel group slumped 48p to 86.5p.

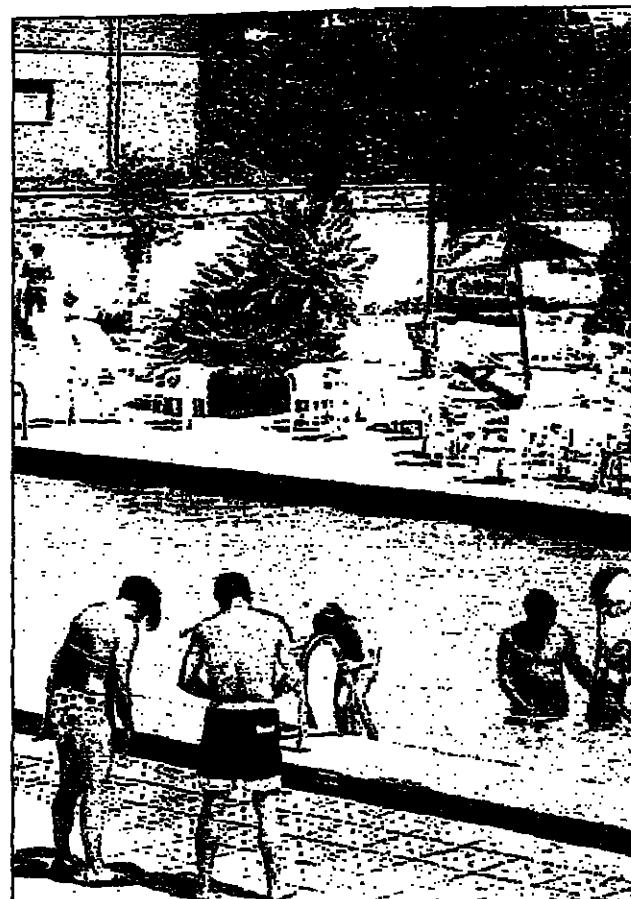
The company is in dispute with British Airways, from which it bought Caledonian Airways two years ago, over a service contract with the airline which Inspirations blamed for delays to its holidays during the peak summer months.

Following the sale of Caledonian, BA retained the contract to service the planes for Inspirations. Inspirations said that "on numerous occasions throughout the peak season we suffered from serviceable aircraft being delivered late from our engineering contractor".

To alleviate the delays Inspirations was forced to charter at least one extra plane. It has also been faced with the cost of compensating disgruntled passengers and has subsequently suffered lower demand and a hit to its credibility. A television documentary in early September made explicit reference to delays on Caledonian which further depressed demand.

Inspirations said it was not possible to quantify the net cost of the maintenance schedule problems, which would depend on how much the company could recover from BA. Analysts said any recovery would be too late for the year to September. BA and Inspirations are understood to be trying to sort out their differences amicably.

Vic Fatah, chief executive, said Caledonian was a significant customer for BA's maintenance arm and it had been able to renegotiate the agreement on much more favourable



Holiday hopes: Summer 1997 bookings are well ahead

terms. "These arrangements have been designed to avoid a repeat of the problems experienced in summer 1996," he said.

News of the exceptional hit to profits marred an otherwise buoyant trading statement which confirmed that following the overcapacity of 1995, supply and demand had moved much better into balance for the holiday industry in 1996.

Inspirations also said its winter bookings were running 72 per cent up on last year and bookings for summer 1997 were also well ahead.

The warning from Inspira-

tions is the latest blow to an industry already under the cloud of an Office of Fair Trading investigation into its virtually integrated operations. It has been argued that operators use their ownership of chains of travel agents to distort competition. A judgement from the OFT is expected imminently.

The investigation by the OFT is its second in as many years and reflects concerns that customers are not being made aware of the links between agents and operators. Thomson and Airtours own Lunn Poly and Going Places, while Inspirations has a joint venture with AT May.

DBS halts plans for full listing

NIC CICUTTI

DBS Management, a network for independent financial advisers, yesterday shelved plans to move from the Alternative Investment Market to a full stock-market listing after admitting that it faced a series of allegations from its former compliance director. Shares in DBS dropped sharply from 481p to 422.5p.

The company said it had asked its regulator, the Personal Investment Authority, to in-

vestigate the allegations made by Kenneth Stead. But Ken Davy, chairman of DBS and a PIA board member, stressed the allegations did not place investors' funds at risk.

Mr Stead, who headed DBS's compliance team at its Huddersfield head office, has resigned after being ordered to do so by the board.

His departure after seven years with the company followed a series of allegations made by him against the board, DBS said yesterday.

The company refused to give details, but said: "The board of DBS requested that an independent report be commissioned into the issues raised, which has been completed."

"It has been concluded... that the most serious allegation, regarding a compliance issue in 1992, has not been substantiated."

"In relation to other matters raised by Mr Stead, which the board does not believe to be material, certain operational procedures will be reviewed."

Trump casino gets Hard Rock

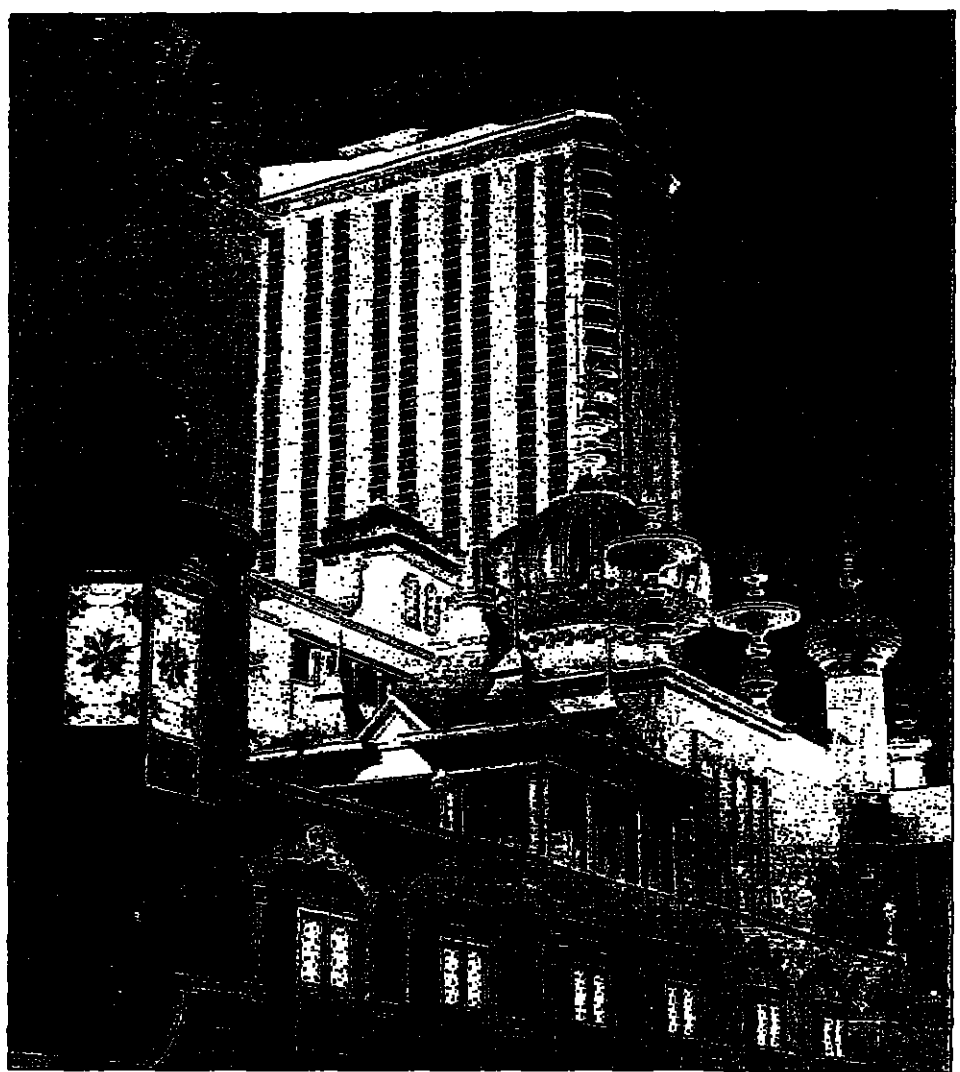
Rank said yesterday it has teamed up with American property developer Donald Trump to open its 61st Hard Rock restaurant at the Taj Mahal casino in Atlantic City (right).

A similar arrangement is also planned at the Trump Castle Hotel, also in Atlantic City. The talks include the possible construction of a Hard Rock Live entertainment venue and "other non-casino operations within a total Hard Rock-themed facility".

Andrew Teare, new chief executive of Rank, said recently the Butlins to Odeon cinemas leisure group was planning a rapid expansion of the Hard Rock brand around the world.

On Monday, Trump Hotels shareholders approved the acquisition of the Castle from Donald Trump, who is chairman of the publicly-held company.

Mr Trump, owner of almost 40 per cent of the Trump Hotels, did not vote his shares, and 82 per cent of the votes cast were in favour of the \$480m acquisition, he said.



Dividend suspended at MDIS

JILL TREANOR

Investors in the troubled McDonnell Douglas Information Systems company were dealt another blow yesterday, as the shares dived 7p to 54p on worse-than-expected half-year losses of £9.4m and news that the interim dividend was being scrapped.

The computer services firm also warned that it did not expect the previously announced restructuring of its operations to yield any benefits until 1997.

MDIS has made several profit warnings since its shares were floated at 260p each on the stock market in March 1994. The latest results compare with a £1.67m profit in the first-half of last year. Half-year turnover fell from £79m to £60.5m, in part reflecting the disposal of non-core businesses last year.

"The directors planned for 1996 to be a turnaround year leading to scope for improved financial performance in 1997 and subsequent years," a MDIS spokesman said yesterday.

He added: "In the short term, trading conditions continue to be difficult and the benefits of the restructuring are unlikely to be evident until 1997."

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18 YEARS' EXPERIENCE SETS US A WORLD APART

Year to prepare for order-driven trades

PETER RODGERS
Financial Editor

A new computerised system for trading the FTSE 100 stocks would not be introduced for at least another year, the Stock Exchange said yesterday.

The Exchange has decided to give member firms the time they wanted to prepare for the introduction of the new system. Member firms had pressed for a minimum of nine months, and possibly as much as a year, to get the system up and running.

The new "order-driven" system will be a radical departure from the present trading methods, introduced exactly 10 years ago, under which market makers offered competing quotations. Instead it will execute trades automatically once they have been input to the computer system.

As part of the changes, the Exchange has decided to abolish the 10-year-old distinction between market makers and

other Stock Exchange firms, which it had hoped would continue.

The end of the market makers' privileges was inevitable following a decision by the Chancellor in the summer to extend stamp duty relief to all firms that hold blocks of shares during trading, as long as they are members of a recognised investment exchange.

The decision made redundant an earlier Exchange proposal for the market makers to continue under another name - registered principal traders - who would have had a monopoly on the relief.

The Chancellor's tax changes may also lead to a big expansion of stock borrowing, hitherto the preserve of the market makers. In the new system, any firm with enough capital to satisfy the regulator will be allowed tax relief on borrowed stock, which will allow them to speculate by taking short positions.

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The Sporting Life

sport

LIFE AT THE TOP: England's multi-millionaire former captain outlines his manifesto for management, both at home and abroad. **Glenn Moore** reports

Platt busy planning for the future

Some of England's players forsook the Glenn Hoddle regime of isotonic drinks and high-energy diet for a glass of wine and canapés last night. There were no complaints from Hoddle, however, just the acknowledgement of an opportunity to draw strength for the future from the past.

It is not as if there was any danger of the players getting out of hand – they were at a Downing Street reception for the heroes of Euro 96. The timing could not have been better, for England and John Major. For the footballers the evening was an appetiser to the main course of the summer's success as they prepare for the first of their home World Cup matches against Poland on Wednesday. For the Conservative Party leader it was a chance to bask in reflected glory.

English players are becoming more open to ideas. European players coming in has helped

That had come in the afternoon, when Tony Blair posed for photographs with Alex Ferguson. The Manchester United manager was one of the speakers at an FA-sponsored fringe meeting at the Labour party conference. The meeting was hosted by David Davies, the FA's Director of Public Affairs, who then rushed to London for the evening function. Even for a former BBC political correspondent this was parliamentary networking on the grand scale – there could be no better demonstration of football's current high profile.

Some of that is down to Euro 96 and that part will fade if Hoddle does not maintain Venables' success. Unlike his predecessor, Hoddle was not invited to Downing Street – the evening was strictly for the players and management involved in Euro 96. Instead he stayed in the team hotel, continuing his series of one-to-one chats with his players.

Earlier he had supervised an almost full training session. Of the 23 players he picked last week only Robbie Fowler and Dominic Matteo did not train, and they sat and watched as they waited, in hope, for their leg injuries to ease.

One player following the session with great interest was David Platt. The Arsenal midfielder recently said he intends to move into management and, having missed the trip to Moldova with injury, had not worked with Hoddle before. His pursuit of knowledge has been

greatly helped recently, such as been the turnover at Highbury. Hoddle is the fifth coach he has played under this season.

"It has been quite an exciting time," he agreed after training, adding: "The good thing now is that we can progress. Now Arsène Wenger can find out what he has at his disposal and strengthen the side."

"He's obviously got some Continental ideas but I am sure he will look to open players' minds first with some small changes so they accept the radical ones more easily later."

Glenn Hoddle can do the same. It is important to learn off people, especially if you want to stay in the game. You don't want to take everything Wenger says and use it, you take out what you want and use it. At Sampdoria

I thought [Sven-Goran] Eriksson was superb but I would not do everything he did.

"For a start it is very difficult to train in England like they do on the Continent. There are no free weeks. People talk about

training twice a day – when are you going to do it? We have just played seven games in 20 days, there is no space to train twice a day."

"In Italy, where they play from Sunday to Sunday, they can use that week to train towards the game. They say 'we will do that Monday, that Tuesday', etc. But in England you do not know how hard the game will be in midweek. It might be a really hard game and you will think 'I can't do that on Thursday now, they need rest'."

"English players are becoming more open to ideas. European players coming in has helped, people see the way they train and talk about the game. European managers will help further, people will learn from them and be influenced when they go into management."

For now Platt is making the most of playing. "I'm playing the best football I have since I came back. I've had no problems with the knee since March. I still have playing ambitions – I came back to England to win things. Will it happen with Arsenal this year? We deserve a lot of credit for keeping it going. A lot of people thought it would fall down while we waited for the new manager. All the talk about us being in crisis made us more resilient. We are in a good position but other teams are better equipped for the championship than we are."



Platt: Makes no secret of his managerial aspirations

Photograph: David Ashdown

LIFE AT THE BOTTOM: The player-manager of the club 92nd out of England's 92 explains to **Guy Hodgson** the attractions of his new role

Dixon satisfies his competitive nature

Even Ray Wilkins seemed slightly perplexed why, having just turned 40, he was playing in a man's game when he is, in football terms, an OAP. "It's something I have to get out of my system," he told an interviewer, explaining his decision to turn out for Hibernian. After all, the fact he was meeting Rangers that night hardly implied he had fallen far from the grace of his best years.

But how do you explain someone like Kerry Dixon? Chelsea's golden boy, who seemed to personify the flash of King's Road as well as the bang of two productive feet, has got football in the system all right but he has gone down much further than the Scottish Premier Division to satisfy his craving. Being player-manager of England's bottom club, Doncaster Rovers, suggests more than a love affair with the game, it implies a worrying addiction.

In the past, old England players would fade away in the lower divisions but hardly ever now. Most prefer the big wages and low responsibility on the fringes of Premiership teams to pitting their slowing reflexes against Neanderthal and jealous centre-halves all too ready to kick lumps out of someone who knew better things. Dixon is an exception.

"I'm sure you're wrong," the 35-year-old striker said when it was put to him that England players do not do farewell tours in football's provinces any more. "There's...". His voice trailed off as he raked his brain and then changed his mind. "I suppose you could be right."

He was sitting in an office that is about as far as you can get from the plushness of Chelsea where, for nine seasons, he was the closest thing to the new Peter Osgood until Gianluca Vialli arrived at Stamford Bridge. Belle Vue might have a French name but no one would describe it as fancy and Dixon, indeed the

whole club, operates from Fortakings parked on the forecourt. You would call it bargain basement except the "pile it high, sell it cheap" brigade might sue.

"I just love football, scoring goals in particular," Dixon said by way of mitigation. "It's something I've done since I was seven and I'm reluctant to let it go. I know I'd miss the banter of the dressing-room. People say you can't beat the spirit of camaraderie in the Armed Forces but this must push it close."



Dixon: Single-minded

"I couldn't hang around the reserves having an easy life and picking up good money. I could have stayed at Watford and tried to play my way back into the first team but the job satisfaction would not match what I could get here."

It is probably his upbringing that makes the bottom of the pile an attractive option. Dixon may still have the knack of ghosting into penalty areas but his early years were laced by being marked for rejection. At Luton he was one of only two schoolboys cast out from a crop of 13 while he was let go by Tottenham despite scoring 30 goals in a season for the youth team. Only after he had completed an apprenticeship as a toolmaker did this square peg find the right shaped hole: Reading.

From there he moved to Chelsea, the club having a place in his feelings that has survived even a tempestuous relationship with the chairman, Ken Bates, and a seemingly unending supply of strikers bought to replace him. "You don't spend the best years of your life at a place without feeling a great deal of affection for it," he said. "My one regret in my career is that I didn't become Chelsea's record scorer. I finished with 193 goals, nine short."

Figures are important to Dixon, like the four goals he got in eight games for his country. He rattles off statistics with authority and the big number in his mind at the moment is his 300th strike. "I'm close," he said. "I've lost track of exactly how many I've scored in the cups, but I know I'm near. I expect a journalist will come up to me in the near future and tell me I've got there. It's one of the things that keeps me going."

So far he has scored twice for Doncaster and the enduring nature of his single-minded pursuit of goals surprises, just as the choice of entry into management does. It is not hard to imagine Yorkshire folk looking at Dixon's blond good looks with the words "southern softie" at the ready. Yet Doncaster has taken to him, applauding his decision to work at the tough end of the trade.

"The people here are different class," he said. "They have their way of saying and doing things but I've been made to feel very welcome. I think they appreciate I've not come here to use Doncaster as a quick stepping stone to somewhere else. I'm ambitious but I have plans for the club as well as myself."

The craving appears to be a long way from being sated. "The Premiership is the place to be," he said, "but at the moment I'm happy with life where I am."

Halifax hit new low in Cup exit

Non-League notebook
RUPERT METCALF

All of the GM Vauxhall Conference sides involved in FA Cup action this past week managed to avoid defeat – except for Halifax Town, who were hammered 4-1 at home by Bishop Auckland last Saturday.

That crushing by the United Bond League side was the worst result of what has been a difficult season for the former Football League club. They have struggled to stay above the Conference relegation zone, Tuesday's 1-0 defeat at Macclesfield left Halifax with just four teams beneath them.

John Carroll, the former Runcorn manager in his first full season in charge at The Shay, has

brought in several experienced players, especially in attack. Jason Beckford, once of Manchester City, arrived this week to compete with the summer signings Bobby Davison, the former Derby and Leeds striker who has returned to Halifax after a 16-year absence, and Mike Norbury (ex-Doncaster and Preston) for a front-line place.

At least the future looks brighter off the pitch. Next season the rugby league side Halifax Blue Sox are due to move in to The Shay, which will be renamed the Calderdale Sports Stadium as part of a three-stage redevelopment plan to be funded in part by the local council. The first stage, due for completion before the end of the season, will raise capacity to 11,834, with 4,053 seats.

Elsewhere in the FA Cup, Stevenage, the Conference leaders, were held to a 1-1 home draw by Baldock, of the Dr Martens League, last Saturday but gained a 2-1 success in Wednesday's replay, thanks to a last-minute winner by Peter Sodie. The only Conference side as yet unable to overcome lower-level opponents are Hayes, who face a second replay against Grays, of the Isthmian League, on Monday.

Durham City have been expelled from the FA Cup after it was revealed that, in last weekend's 1-1 draw against Consett, they fielded a player who had appeared for South Shields in the preliminary round. Consett now travel to play Halifax's conquerors, Bishop Auckland, on 12 October.

The burden of Ronaldo

Spain

Ronaldo, the new hero of Nou Camp, is, it seems, under as much pressure at Barcelona as the Spanish club's coach, Bobby Robson.

The former England manager is unhappy that, when his £13m striker has an off game, so does the team. "We can't always expect Ronaldo to sort out the games for us," Robson said after Wednesday's 1-1 home draw with Tenerife that handed the lead in the Spanish First Division to their big rivals, Real Madrid. "He shouldn't be the key... he's only 20 years old."

Ronaldo was shut out by the Tenerife defender Cesar Gomez and failed to score for the first time in four games. With five in six matches, though, the Brazilian international is the league's top scorer.

Despite Barcelona's good start, they have had Johan Cruyff, their former coach, Johan Cruyff. "Frankly, they're playing badly," the Dutchman said last week. He is still a season-ticket holder at Nou Camp, and receives a hero's welcome at every home game – despite his ongoing law suits against the club for unfair dismissal and loss of earnings.

The official response to their former coach's criticisms came yesterday from Joan Gaspar, a club vice-president, who said: "If Cruyff doesn't say bad things about Barcelona, he'll be a nobody." This dispute will surely run and run...



AROUND THE WORLD

Brazil

All is not well in Ronaldo's homeland, Brazil. Beset by on-field violence, the domestic league has now been criticised by the country's greatest footballing son: Pele. "It worries me to know that more people attend rodeos than football matches in Brazil," Pele said last weekend. "Brazil are the only four-time world champions, but most of our football clubs are broke." The 24-year national league and its gruelling twice-a-week schedule is a big problem, according to Pele. "If we don't organise our most traditional teams into a truly professional league, they may be doomed to bankruptcy," he said.

Italy

Much embarrassment at the Stadio Luigi Ferraris on Wednesday night, where Sampdoria were beaten 2-0 by their city rivals, Genoa, who completed a 4-2 aggregate win

in the second round of the Italian Cup. Genoa are now in the Second Division, and after losing to them it seems that the Sampdoria coach, Sven Goran Eriksson, needs some good results to save his job.

The Sampdoria president, Enrico Mantovani, said after the game: "My first problem now is to find a way of refunding those Sampdoria fans who bought tickets for tonight's game. Tonight we played very badly. Everything is now up for discussion and when I say everything, I mean the coach, his assistant, the squad and the directors."

Romania

A Romanian non-League team, trailing their opponents 16-0, fled from the field two minutes before time last Sunday after fans threatened to strip them naked if they conceded two more goals. "With the score 16-0 for the opposing team, some gypsies sang about Athletic Bucharest would leave the stadium naked if they lost the game 18-0," the newspaper *Evenimentul Zilei* reported.

The club have been fined 50 million lei (almost £10,000) by the Romanian football federation for failing to finish the game. "We're very sorry for Athletic but we had to apply the rules, which are the same for everybody," a federation spokesman said.

Rupert Metcalf

Symons looks for better times

Trevor Haylett talks to the Wales defender who is glad for a break from club pressures

It has been the kind of season so far where Kit Symons must have yearned for the chance to pull the plug and start all over again. Back to August's warm sunshine, the outlook bright for both he and Manchester City and for Alan Ball, the manager who entrusted him with the captain's armband and the responsibility to lead their promotion assault.

That was then. Now it is somewhat different. There have been dark clouds over Maine Road almost from day one and the storm quickly blew the bouncing Ball away. City are nearer the bottom than the top, the comedians have enjoyed a field day at Francis Lee's expense – and then there was Lincoln City and a double Coca-Cola Cup humiliation.

For Symons, international football proved less a compensation than an additional source of frustration. City's Premiership drop last May saw him take a step back in Bobby Gould's plans, with no more than a watching brief as Wales' World

Cup campaign opened with a flourish, twice gorging themselves on San Marino to put six easy points on the board.

Now, however, fate has taken a kinder turn. Not this time for Blackburn's Chris Coleman, whose Achilles injury has put him out for the best part of the season, but instead for the Basingstoke-born Symons, who wins back his defensive place as Wales promise another uncomfortable British reception for the Dutch tomorrow.

It is just the kind of occasion he assumed he was guaranteeing himself when he left Portsmouth for Manchester's "other club" 14 months ago. A big Cardiff Arms Park crowd, loads of atmosphere, an outcome which will mean an awful lot to an awful lot of people.

"These are the games you want to be involved in and, even though I always look forward to coming away with Wales, I

must admit it is especially nice to have a break from all the attention that is focused on the club at the moment," said Symons yesterday, after learning of his recall.

Naturally the video machine has taken a bashing this week, replaying the meaningful action from that balmy, almost barny, European Championship evening when the Netherlands' inferiority was laid bare in a 4-1 England extravaganza. Bobby Gould and Terry Venables might not be bosom pals, but the glorious manifestation of the England coach's methods on that night might just do Wales a favour if it plants seeds of insecurity in fragile Dutch minds.

"We won't be fooled into thinking they are a poor side, but the summer showed that they are not invincible and it is up to us to find their weaknesses and exploit them," Symons said.

League back down over Palace request for postponement

Crystal Palace yesterday won their battle to have their First Division meeting with Sheffield United at Selhurst Park, scheduled for Sunday, called off.

Dave Bassett's side were unhappy that the Football League rejected an initial request for a postponement when they had four players called up for senior and Under-21 international duty and another on standby.

terday winning late call-ups, bringing the number of players unavailable up to a possible seven. League officials relented.

Ray Houghton (Republic of Ireland), Tony Scully (Republic of Ireland) and Chris Day and Bruce Dyer (both England Under-21s) were joined on the international scene by Dougie Freedman and Robert Quim. Freedman has been drafted into Craig Brown's Scotland

squad for the World Cup matches with Latvia and Estonia, with Quinn answering the call of the Republic's Under-21 team. Palace also have Danny Vauxhall on standby for England's youngsters and a League spokesman, Chris Hull, said: "We have allowed the game to be postponed because we were presented with an exceptional set of circumstances."

The First Division leaders,

Bolton, will also be inactive this weekend after having tomorrow's game with Oxford at the Manor Ground postponed because of fresh international calls. John McGinlay has been named as a late inclusion in Scotland's squad and fellow striker Nathan Blake has won a place in the Wales squad for the World Cup qualifying tie with the Netherlands. Bolton will now visit Oxford on 19 November.

Gould waits for verdict on Pembroke

Wales, with six World Cup points in the bag after two victories over San Marino, chase a third win against the Netherlands at Cardiff Arms Park tomorrow evening without Ryan Giggs, Chris Coleman – and maybe Mark Pembroke, who has been struggling to recover from a calf strain.

The Sheffield Wednesday man trained for the first time yesterday without any adverse reaction and Gould will monitor his progress in the remaining sessions before deciding whether he is ready to face the Dutch. If Pembroke does not recover, Birmingham City's Andy Legg will take his place at left wing-back.

Gary Speed replaces the suspended Giggs while Kit Symons comes in for the injured Coleman. Gould is hoping that Speed will be fired up against the Dutch, after being disappointed to be left out of the 6-0 win over San Marino in August.

Gould has added the Bolton striker Nathan Blake to his squad to provide cover for John Hartson (ankle) and Gareth Taylor (shin splints).

Gus Hiddink, the Dutch coach, has had his preparations hampered by injuries to Patrick Kluivert, Michael Reiziger, Richard Witschge, Marc Overmars, Peter Hoekstra, Rene Eijkelkamp, Youri Mulder and Johan de Kock.

Wales Team (World Cup qualifying Group 5): Gareth Taylor, Neil Jenkins, Mark Jones, Ryan Giggs, Chris Coleman, Mark Pembroke, Andy Legg, Gary Speed, Dougie Freedman, Robert Quim, Craig Brown, Dougie Freedman, Robert Quim, Craig Brown, Dougie Freedman, Robert Quim, Craig Brown.

SPORT

RFU's
move on
deal with
clubsRugby Union
DAVID LLEWELLYN

Twickenham last night made its first positive move to try to sort out the long-running dispute with the English Professional Rugby Union Clubs. A statement from the Rugby Football Union announced that they had contacted Epruc with a view to begin negotiations to put England's rugby house in order.

The move comes almost exactly a week before the 11 October deadline, the day when Epruc and its member clubs have threatened to break away from the Union. Sources within the RFU were last night sounding notes of cautious optimism about this latest development and Donald Kerr, the chairman of Epruc, said: "I am grateful to have contact made with us. It is nearly three weeks since we last had formal contact with the RFU committee members. We have always been amenable to talks. We approach them in an open, positive, constructive frame of mind."

The RFU is to propose two specific items for consideration: a financial agreement for the next two years and beyond; and a clear partnership for the organisation of the club's league and cup competitions, domestically and in Europe, in terms of financial fixtures and future competitions. Twickenham also announced it is to reorganise the RFU's way of working in order to facilitate the professional game.

This last move is as a result of a working party set up specifically to examine the infrastructure of the RFU and it is expected to streamline the cumbersome committee system, which is locked into the old amateur ways and can clog up too easily and slow down development of what is now a rapidly changing game.

The statement continued: "The RFU is determined to avoid a breakaway and will help to ensure a viable future for professional club rugby, while at the same time not disadvantage the rest of the game. The RFU wants clubs to commit themselves to releasing their players for representative duties to an agreed schedule."

That would mean the clubs allowing players to take part in

Divisional matches, something which may prove to be a sticking point, but Epruc still sounded reasonably positive with Kerr explaining: "There will be no preconditions. Our position is that we have asked clubs to obtain the necessary permission, under their constitutions, to leave the Union some time after 11 October - either amicably, or instantly if the RFU adopt a hostile stance."

Twickenham certainly seems prepared to go along with Epruc's desire to take more responsibility for the running of club competitions and affairs in general, but matters of discipline could prove another problem area.

One case has already cropped up involving the Bristol lock Phil Adams, who was fined the equivalent of six match fees by his club following a stamping incident at Northampton last month. But it looks as if Twickenham is going to investigate the matter further, the implication being that Bristol were not hard enough. An RFU spokesman said a disciplinary hearing would be fixed within the next couple of weeks.

Ireland's top 14 clubs have taken England's lead and formed a body to represent their interests. The Irish First Division Clubs Association has met with the approval of the Irish RFU. But all is not well across St George's Channel. Some English clubs have angered officials of Leinster and Ulster by refusing to release their Irish players to represent their provinces in the European Cup which starts next week. Northampton and Sale have three players between them and London Irish are considering following suit with their Irish. The Ulster coach, Tony Russ, said: "Epruc have ordered the English clubs not to release their players and I am at the sharp end of it."

The European Cup tournament director, Roger Pickering, confirmed that there has been a bid to televise the competition but he would not identify the company, nor the amount, rumoured to be £140m from BSkyB.

Jack Rowell has added props Will Green (Wasps) and Matt Volland (Northampton) to the 45-man squad for next Wednesday's training session at Bisham Abbey.



The Premiership is the place to be, but I'm happy with life where I am
Basement tapes: Kerry Dixon on life at the bottom

26

Dettori maintains the whip hand as Bahamian Bounty brings in booty



Frankie Dettori continues his spectacular run of success with a narrow victory aboard Bahamian Bounty (right) in the big race at Newmarket yesterday, the Middle Park Stakes, and will now attempt to maintain the sequence on Classic Cliche in Sunday's Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe

Blackburn go
into denial
over Flowers

Football

The noises coming out of Blackburn Rovers had a familiar ring yesterday as they denied that their goalkeeper, Tim Flowers, was about to move to Newcastle United for £4m.

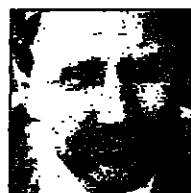
"There is simply no truth in this story whatsoever," Robert Coar, the Rovers chairman, said, eerily echoing the rebuttals that accompanied rumours of Alan Shearer's transfer.

Better news for Rovers and Scotland was that the centre-half Colin Hendry intends to be playing again by early next month, after having had minor surgery on a groin strain.

Manchester City's hopes of attracting some of Dave Whelan's £150m were robustly deflated by the millionaire Wigan Athletic chairman. "I wish City well, but I'm Wigan through and through," he said. "I will never be involved with another club and I promise to give £5m to charity if I ever break my word."

David Holdsworth, the 27-year-old Watford defender, is to join Sheffield United for £300,000 with a further £200,000 dependant on appearances.

Who would be a football manager?



On Monday Alan Smith of Wycombe became the ninth manager to lose his job this season. Here Howard Wilkinson, himself one of the casualties, explains the pressures and pitfalls of life in the limelight

Since the end of last season, nine managers of English league clubs have lost their jobs. Some were sacked, some, euphemistically perhaps, have resigned. Presumably the intended outcome of those changes was somehow to produce a more successful club.

The first team's ability to win football matches must come somewhere on that list which constitutes success at a football club. Okay, there are exceptions. Bruce Rioch's lot finished fifth last season, qualified for Europe and so far as I know remained undefeated in major competitions this season up to the day he left.

Dave Merrington's last season at Southampton saw them once again avoid the dreaded drop into so-called First Division anonymity (and, dare I mention it, potential poverty). All this by the way, in a season when Matt Le Tissier actually failed to produce his usual one-man rescue mission.

So where are they now? The clubs, I mean, not the managers. Doncaster Rovers remain bottom of the third, Mansfield in the bottom third. Queen's Park Rangers have moved, but down. Manchester City, like the grand old Duke of York, remain half way, neither up nor down.

In the Premiership Arsène Wenger has the task of improving a team that has done very nicely, thank you, without his particular blend of Gallic

charm and Oriental inscrutability. Southampton have just won their first game in the Premiership under one Graeme, and Leeds have yet to notch their first point in the Premiership under another Graham.

It would seem the improvements sought for on the winning front have not yet materialised. But then, is it winning we're looking for here?

I was at Meadow Lane last Saturday watching Notts County and Wrexham grind out a 0-0 thriller. Last season Notts County did not have great difficulty scoring, they finished a creditable fourth, only to lose disappointingly to Bradford in the Wembley play-offs.

However, the Magpies faithful were not happy. Their song was definitely more a case of "One for Sorrow", and only very occasionally "Two for Joy". It seems they were not happy with the type of football being played - "pass the ball, get it on the floor", being more the order of the day. So Colin Murphy, County's general manager, decided to give them what they wanted. On

Saturday his team passed, as they have done all season, and they never looked like scoring, as they haven't done all season.

Were the natives happy though? No, they were not. They were very definitely restless. Could it be that winning football matches is then vaguely attractive to supporters, I'm forced to ask.

I read recently that it's supporters and the media that sack managers. What a load of nonsense that ought to be. That decision ought to be the sole responsibility of directors. Supporters and the media have a right to express their opinion, but to allow them the power - or even let them believe they have the power - to perform the ultimate act is a very slippery slope on which to plant your directorial rear.

Having said that, there are situations where a crowd's response to the management affects the team's performance to the point where it becomes impossible for a manager to manage. But the directors must still exercise their collective responsibility, and it's one they abdicate at their peril.

Of course, there are occasions where the manager becomes the convenient carrier of the proverbial can. In such circumstances his dismissal might be cynically viewed as a short-term act of appeasement, designed merely to deflect criticism.

Direct face-to-face hostility is part and parcel of the manager's lot. Time numbs the nerve endings, but even those with skin the thickness of an old bull elephant have their sensitivity pierced at times. A few wisecracks, strategically lobbed across the locker room at the golf club on a Sunday morning, added to prolonged direct confrontations, have been known to precipitate an emergency board meeting on many a Monday morning.

The media also has respon-

sibilities, and presenting a balanced point of view is chief amongst these. The current fashion for phone-ins is depressing, a little like reading the death column in your local newspaper.

They are so negative. Customer protection is a principle for which we are justifiably proud in this country and the BBC stands in the vanguard on such matters, but does football, or the BBC for that matter, really need an ex-Cabinet minister starting his radio programme by effectively asking, "Right, who's for the chop this week?"

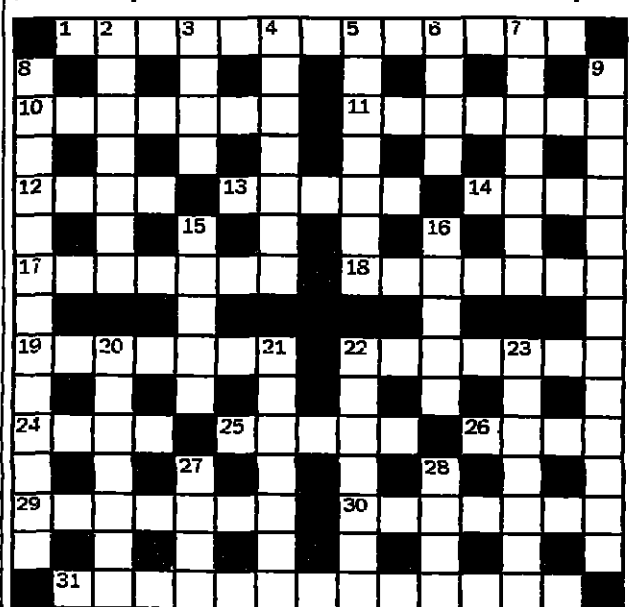
The fans have their chance before, during and after every game in the stadium. Shouldn't issues like ticket allocation, travel arrangements, prices, police protection or non-protection, as the case may be, dominate?

However, "nil desperandum". With only two months of their season gone, the Brazilians, by sheer coincidence, have also sacked nine of their coaches. Even in the land of the beautiful game, it would seem, it's more beautiful to win.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

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By Phil



ACROSS

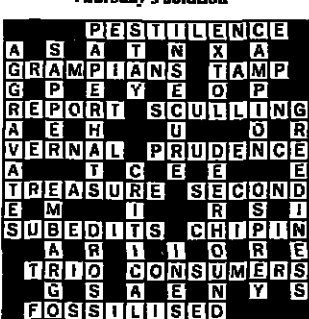
- Part of the Army not under Governmental control? (7, 6)
- Is Queen returning, having appointed the remainder? (7)
- Letter rewritten in spite of left half-finished? (7)
- Party organiser supplying dessert? (4)
- Do stretch in opening of tennis-match? (5, 4)
- Painter has a way in? (7)
- A small tear on that woman's slip? (7)
- Ancient Scot clutching over half of queer stake? (7)

- Book studied to get half this range of knowledge? (7)
- 24 and 25 All-round protection required? Call criminal! (4-5)
- Quiet argument? It's far from stern! (4)
- Insulting a vehicle I have? (7)
- I'm working and on the fiddle! (7)
- Unlikely air transport? It reappears flying round North Carolina? (7, 6)

DOWN

- Taking it easy about police operation? (7)
- 15 Reference book unexpectedly made European currency into virtual money, initially (4-5)

Thursday's solution



- Dissertations about universal subject of Greek myths? (7)
- The girl has volume put into the French book store? (7)
- Quick punch caught part of face? (4)
- Chorister without hesitation quavering - but not like this bird! (7)
- Old coin of the emperor found in March? (5, 8)
- There's some row about astronomical phenomena (6, 7)
- See 3 down
- 16 and 28 Nocturnal illumination dealt with the return of vermin? (5, 4)
- Foremost of critics make certain disapproving noises? (7)
- Yonder - it's a girl? (7)
- Rustic American car losing rear end going round pass? (7)
- Little creatures seen in frozen school bedroom? (7)
- A soft touch is snared by heartless knaves (4)
- See 16 down

Cantona treats French TV to full repertoire

IAN PHILLIPS
reports from Paris

Eric Cantona may have dressed soberly in black for his appearance on France's prime time talk show *Nulle Part Ailleurs* on Wednesday evening but, in true Cantona fashion, his comments were anything but muted.

He launched into an animated criticism of French football and its officials, cheekily agreed that he was the greatest Frenchman in England and announced that he intends not only to finish his playing days on our shores but also to stay on after retirement.

He may have been invited to talk about a new Parisian stage version of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* which he is co-producing, but the conversation very quickly turned to football and life in England. He started by admitting that when he arrived from France it was difficult to make his niche in the English game. "There wasn't really a place for foreigners," he said. "Now, it's a lot easier."

But, now that he feels at home, he's certainly not planning to leave. He asserted that he has no plans to come back to play in France and when asked what he planned to do after retirement said that, in spite of his reticence about good old English cooking, "I'd like to live in England. I've got used to it now."

As to what he may do after he hangs up his boots, he hinted that he would not rule out

becoming a manager, but only "if I can bring something new to the game... I don't want to become one just to be like everybody else. I want to be a 'creator'. If I think I have something to create, I'll continue in football."

Another possible career could be acting. He has already notched up a certain amount of experience with his ads for Nike, Sharp, Bic and



Cantona: Staying in England

Eurostar, as well as his role in the French movie, *Le Bonheur est dans le Pré*, and said that he is now planning to take acting lessons.

Only time will tell if he'll have as much success as Johnny Weissmuller did after slipping out of the Olympic pool, but Cantona already seems convinced that his greatness is assured.

When asked what his reaction had been when the Speaker of the House of Commons, Betty Boothroyd, had proclaimed that "the greatest Frenchman in

England is Eric Cantona", he answered, with a smirk on his face: "She's right."

He was, however, not smiling when asked what he'd like to say about French football. "It's going to ruin," he lamented. "The 25 best players are playing abroad. The people in charge have destroyed football."

After announcing that Cantona had just been voted best French footballer with 41 per cent in a survey carried out by a French magazine, presenter Philippe Gildas asked the Manchester United striker how many votes he thought the second player had received. "Three per cent?" Cantona ventured cheekily, before criticising the fact that two of the four most popular French players (Jean-Pierre Papin and himself) do not form part of the French national team. "I'm still available," he insisted. "[The French football officials] would be too happy if I said I was not available."

He complimented English fans on their singing of the French national anthem, "La Marseillaise", looked coy when admitting that his legs were insured and pooh-poohed the idea that extra-terrestrials exist. But he did not leave without taking a bit of flak. During the French equivalent of *Spitting Image*, *Les Guignols de l'Info*, his puppet was featured painting flowers. "What are you painting?" said a voiceover.

"Everybody sees what they want to see," replied the puppet pretentiously.

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